# Student Q Manual


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Faculty of Business and Economics
Monash University

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# Q Manual

# Preface and Acknowledgements

The purpose of the *Q (for Quality) Manual* is to provide new students with practical and easily accessible information regarding university-level study. As its name suggests, this publication is aimed at increasing your effectiveness as a student. For many of you who have not experienced university level study, the *Q Manual* will provide you with ideas, suggestions and guidelines to enable you to achieve academic success by producing quality work, and getting it submitted on time. We suggest you read the *Q Manual* thoroughly and refer to it often throughout your course of study.

The *Q Manual* commences with an overview of the Faculty of Business and Economics, its goals, structure and expectations regarding student performance, as well as important policy information about student assessment. The next chapter provides useful advice in relation to approaches to study at the university level. Then follows the bulk of the *Q Manual*, which focuses on research skills, academic writing skills, and in particular, chapters devoted to commonly required academic assignments, such as essays, literature reviews, reports and case study method. The section relating to academic writing and assignment preparation is followed by chapters covering academic honesty and referencing techniques. The final sections of the *Q Manual* cover oral presentation skills and exam strategies.

There are many people whose valuable contributions to this edition of the Q Manual must be acknowledged. They include (in no particular order):

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Finally, we wish you a stimulating, challenging and rewarding learning experience throughout your undergraduate and postgraduate studies with the Faculty of Business and Economics.

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# Chapter 1
# Introduction

## 1.1 Welcome

Congratulations on your selection to study one of the courses offered by the Faculty of Business and Economics at Monash University. This manual is intended to provide you with information on how to produce quality work and achieve the best possible results in your examinations.

The major goal of the university is to assist you to obtain an excellent education so that you may take your place in society as a well-qualified graduate. It is important to note that while the courses provide the teaching support and the necessary framework for your studies, success can be achieved only through your personal commitment and dedication to hard work throughout all the years of your course.

The following information is aimed at familiarising you with the Monash University study environment and increasing your effectiveness as a Monash student, thereby enabling you to reach your potential. For those of you who are experiencing university level study for the first time, this manual will lay an important foundation and prepare you for a new world.

## 1.2 Monash University

Monash University was established in 1961 and named after General Sir John Monash (1865–1931). Sir John was a soldier, scholar and engineer, and the Commanding General of the Australian forces in France in World War 1. In addition, as the first Chairman of the State Electricity Commission, he took on the immense task of overseeing the development of the LaTrobe Valley's brown coal resources. Sir John was a man of wide interests and vast intellectual range. He was this country's first Doctor of Engineering and exemplifies the University's motto – *Ancora Imparo* (I am still learning).

The university now has a population of more than 50,000 students from over 100 countries, who speak 90 languages. There are eight Monash campuses and two centres, in Italy and London. The primary pursuits of teaching and research are carried out in the university's ten faculties. The faculties, which each cover a specific body of knowledge, are: Art and Design; Arts; Business and Economics; Education; Engineering; Information Technology; Law; Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences; Pharmacy; and Science.

## 1.3 Faculty of Business and Economics

### 1.3.1 Goals

The aim of the faculty is to use its scale, scope and unique internal diversity to become an international leader in the pursuit, dissemination and analysis of knowledge, particularly in the disciplines of accounting, banking, econometrics, economics, finance, management, marketing, and tourism. By the application of such knowledge, its staff and students will contribute to the economic, social and commercial development of Australia and other countries in an increasingly globalised environment.

### 1.3.2 Faculty structure

The Faculty of Business and Economics is the largest faculty in the university, with more than 17,000 students enrolled over five Australian campuses at Berwick, Caulfield, Clayton, Gippsland and Peninsula, as well as in Malaysia and South Africa.

In addition to a diverse range of undergraduate bachelors degrees, the faculty offers a comprehensive range of graduate courses including an executive certificate, graduate certificates and diplomas, masters degrees by coursework and research, the Master of Business Administration, the Doctor of Business Administration, the Master of Philosophy and the Doctor of Philosophy.

Courses are delivered on campus, usually through lectures, tutorials and WebCT Vista, while off-campus students are catered for by distance education.

The Dean and the main faculty office are located on the Caulfield campus. In addition, there are faculty staff located at the other campuses.

Go to http://www.buseco.monash.edu.au/student/contact/ for location and contact details.

### 1.3.3 Departments and centres

The Business and Economics faculty is subdivided into organisations that are responsible for particular areas of knowledge. There are six departments and two research centres. The departments are: Accounting and Finance, Business Law and Taxation, Econometrics and Business Statistics, Economics, Management, and Marketing. The research centres are: Centre of Policy Studies, and Centre for Health Economics. They cover fields of study including accounting, banking, business law, business statistics, economics, econometrics, finance, international business, management, human resource management, marketing, taxation and tourism. Whatever your major or areas of study it is essential that you have an understanding of each of the disciplines and how they interact with each other in the overall operations of a business organisation.

### 1.3.4 Aims for learning at Monash University and in the Faculty of Business and Economics

The university and the faculty recognise the needs of students for their lives following graduation. As a Monash graduate you will be operating in a globalised and rapidly-changing world, and the university and faculty aim to develop in students' attributes beyond the ability to understand and operate competently with course and unit content. The aims are that students will develop in ways that will enable them to:

- Engage in an internationalised and increasingly globalised world;
- Engage in discovery, analysis, integration and application for problem solving and learning with knowledge;
- Communicate competently orally and in writing across cultures and settings, including their specific disciplines.

As you undertake your studies, you will notice an emphasis on these attributes and you will be engaged in activities and tasks to help you develop them. In the following chapters of this guide, we explain the influences of these attributes on your approach to study.

### 1.3.5 Units

Each department offers a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate units. In a three-year undergraduate degree, there are twenty-four units, with four units to be taken in each semester (part-time students would normally undertake two units each semester). The unit leader or coordinator is responsible for the administration of the particular unit. You can consult with your unit leader, and or coordinator in larger units you may also consult with the other lecturers and tutors.

### 1.3.6 Role of lecturers/tutors

Lecturers and tutors have a key role as facilitators of your learning. They are able and most willing to help you with your studies and can be contacted using your student email account. Their email addresses are located in the unit outline. Alternatively, academic staff can be contacted during their consultation hours which are often posted on their door or outside the main administration office.

### 1.3.7 Role of on-line sources of information

Monash has adopted a learning management system which provides you with access to on-line unit information. The web contains information that you need to know for the unit, both of an administrative nature as well as useful material for your studies.

### 1.3.8 Role of course directors/coordinators

If you are encountering academic performance issues, course progression and similar problems you should initially discuss these with enrolment officers or course advisers. You may, occasionally, then be referred to course directors or course coordinators to help with these issues. Undergraduate students are referred to course directors or course coordinators by the faculty office and postgraduate students by departmental administration staff. If referred, course directors and coordinators are available during their consultation hours.

### 1.3.9 Additional important information

The *Undergraduate and Postgraduate Handbooks* and the *Student Resource Guide* provide important information regarding various aspects of university life. The *Student Resource Guide* is distributed to all students at the time of initial enrolment and is available on-line at www.monash.edu.au/pubs. It contains details of the university's code of practice for teaching and learning, as well as grievance and appeals procedures. Further copies can be obtained from Student Service Centres on all campuses. An excellent resource for students is also available on-line via the student link on the Business and Economics Faculty webpage at http://www.buseco.monash.edu.au/student/. The site contains links to important information regarding: courses and units, admissions and enrolments, schools and departments, exams and results, administration, study resources, calendars and timetables, IT and computing, support services, careers and employment, international students, and clubs and associations.

## 1.4 Faculty expectations of student performance

As students of the faculty, there are a number of units that you will study as part of your course. Although these units may have differing methods of assessment, the faculty has the following expectations of your behaviour and performance.

### 1.4.1 Attendance and participation at lectures and tutorials

Lectures and tutorials are central to your performance in the university. Lectures provide the material you require in order to understand the overall nature and direction of the unit. Important concepts and analysis can be emphasised by the lecturer and put into context for the student. Tutorials are a vital part of your studies. They reinforce lecture material and provide you with an opportunity to discuss material presented in lectures, as well as to ask questions. Tutorials also provide you with the opportunity to develop your oral communication skills. The material presented is not designed to give you one view on a topic but to facilitate your understanding of the issue under discussion. Where there are alternative views on an issue, you should learn to articulate, critically approach and assess these differing positions.

### 1.4.2 Special consideration and extension of time for submission of an assessment task

Students need to use a Special Consideration Application when applying for Special Consideration for overall assessment, end-of-semester examinations, or additional assessment for a unit (or units) studied during the current semester. Please refer to the following webpage for information on both faculty and university special consideration policy and procedures:
http://www.buseco.monash.edu.au/secretariat/policies/spec-con.html

Students who require more time to complete a piece of work should apply for an extension of time for submission of an assessment task. Reasons for special consideration include serious short term circumstances beyond the student's control, such as illness, accident, personal trauma, family emergency or compassionate grounds. Applications should be discussed with the examiner/lecturer/tutor responsible for assessing the task. Please refer to the current student faculty webpage for forms and further information:
http://www.buseco.monash.edu.au/student/exams/specconsemester.html

### 1.4.3 Workload

You are expected to undertake private study in addition to attending lectures and tutorials. Preparation of work to be discussed in tutorials is essential. You will also be required to complete assignments and projects and submit them on the due dates. When taking into account the work carried out during mid-semester breaks and exam weeks, you would expect to study more than thirty hours each week.

### 1.4.4 Self-reliance

Compared to your school experience, at the university you are expected to be more independent and self-reliant. In contrast to teachers at school, lecturers and tutors usually teach large numbers of students, sometimes as many as one thousand. They are happy to assist you, but you need to approach the staff member and be clear about what you wish to discuss. It is also your responsibility as a self-reliant student to attend lectures and tutorials, prepare your tutorial work and submit all written work on time.

### 1.4.5 Time management

The expectation at the university is that you learn to manage your own time. This applies to full-time students who have a great deal of time available outside of classes, as well as for part-time students who have to balance work and study.

The following chapter on study techniques in this manual provides, among other things, some helpful hints on how to best manage your time and get the most out of your career as a student.

## 1.5 Student assessment

Assessment in a unit may be made up of several components: a formal examination, essays, tests, assignments, oral presentations and tutorial participation. Assessment details for each unit are provided in the unit guide that you will receive in the first week of each semester.

The final mark that a student receives in a unit will be determined by the board of examiners on the recommendation of the chief examiner, taking into account all aspects of assessment. The rights of students to have assessed work re-marked are determined at the departmental level. A student can only be failed after the exam paper has been marked by two staff members. All results are reviewed by the unit leader. You can find further information relating to the university's assessment in undergraduate units and the responsibilities of examiners using the main policy bank link at:
http://www.buseco.monash.edu.au/secretariat /policies/

### 1.5.1 Examinations

For details of examination regulations, please refer to the *Monash University Calendar*:
http://www.monash.edu.au/pubs/calendar/

### 1.5.2 Use of English dictionaries and calculators

As English is the language of instruction within Monash University, foreign language translation dictionaries are not permitted to be used by students sitting examinations. Calculators are permitted if specified on the examination paper, but some units may have a calculator restriction. Students are advised to familiarise themselves with any calculator restrictions applying in units they are studying. For permitted calculator(s) for examinations and units of study go to the faculty policy link at:
http://www.buseco.monash.edu.au/secretariat/policies/calculator.html

## 1.5.3 Results

At the end of each semester, following the completion of examinations, a board of examiners considers student performance as a whole before the results are published. All undergraduate and coursework graduate students who pass are graded into the categories of high distinction, distinction, credit and pass. Honours courses use a different grading system, classified into first class, second class division A, second class division B, third class and pass.

## 1.5.4 Marks and grades

Following is a list of marks and grades used within the faculty:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 0–49 | N | Fail |
| 40–49 | NS | Fail, supplementary exam awarded by Board of Examiners only to graduate students and under special circumstances |
| 45–49 | NP | Near pass is only awarded to undergraduate students. It may be awarded for the last unit to complete a degree. |
| 50–59 | P | Pass |
| 60–69 | C | Credit |
| 70–79 | D | Distinction |
| 80–100 | HD | High distinction |
| | NE | Not examined. Used when a unit is taught over two semesters |
| | WH | Withheld. Used, for example, when assessment is outstanding due to a special consideration application or incomplete assessment. |
| | DEF | Deferred examination granted |
| | SFR | Satisfied faculty requirements |

This grading system will be current until 2009. For amendments after this time go to: http://www.buseco.monash.edu.au/secretariat/policies/methods-assessment.html

## 1.5.5 Honours grading

Honours units are graded as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Below 50 | Fail |
| 50–59 | HIII |
| 60–69 | HIIB |
| 70–79 | HIIA |
| 80–100 | HI |

## 1.5.6 Examples of grades and corresponding achievement levels

| | HD<br>High Distinction<br>80–100% | D<br>Distinction<br>70–79% | C<br>Credit<br>60–69% | P<br>Pass<br>50–59% | N<br>Fail<br>0–49% |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **General description** | Outstanding or exceptional work in terms of understanding, interpretation and presentation | A very high standard of work which demonstrates originality and insight | Demonstrates a high level of understanding and presentation and a degree of originality and insight | Satisfies the minimum requirements | Fails to satisfy the minimum requirements |
| **Reading** | Strong evidence of independent reading beyond core texts and materials | Evidence of reading beyond core texts and materials | Thorough understanding of core texts and materials | Evidence of having read core texts and materials | Very little evidence of having read any of the core texts and materials |
| **Knowledge of topic** | Demonstrates insight, awareness and understanding of deeper and more subtle aspects of the topic. Ability to consider topic in the broader context of the discipline | Evidence of an awareness and understanding of deeper and more subtle aspects of the topic | Sound knowledge of principles and concepts | Knowledge of principles and concepts at least adequate to communicate intelligently in the topic and to serve as a basis for further study | Scant knowledge of principles and concepts |
| **Articulation of argument** | Demonstrates imagination or flair. Demonstrates originality and independent thought | Evidence of imagination or flair. Evidence of originality and independent thought | Well-reasoned argument based on broad evidence | Sound argument based on evidence | Very little evidence of ability to construct coherent argument |
| **Analytical and evaluative skills** | Highly developed analytical and evaluative skills | Clear evidence of analytical and evaluative skills | Evidence of analytical and evaluative skills | Some evidence of analytical and evaluative skills | Very little evidence of analytical and evaluative skills |
| **Problem solving** | Ability to solve very challenging problems | Ability to solve non-routine problems | Ability to use and apply fundamental concepts and skills | Adequate problem-solving skills | Very little evidence of problem-solving skills |
| **Expression and presentation appropriate to the discipline** | Highly developed skills in expression and presentation | Well developed skills in expression and presentation | Good skills in expression and presentation. Accurate and consistent acknowledgement of sources | Adequate skills in expression and presentation | Inadequate skills in expression and presentation. Inaccurate and inconsistent acknowledgement of sources |

# Chapter 2

## Approaching study in the Faculty of Business and Economics

### Introduction

Study at university is like a full-time job that requires commitment, and cannot just be added on to a range of other interests. It differs in many ways from study in other educational settings. A major difference is the *independence* and *self reliance* expected of students in their study. This idea concerns:

- Managing your time, balancing your study with other commitments.
- Your approach to learning in your units.

In this chapter, we discuss the implications of independence and self reliance for the way you approach your studies. Assistance with time management is also available from university learning and personal support services, go to http://www.monash.edu/pubs/handbooks/srg/srg-266.html for faculty and campus contacts.

## 2.1 The study "mindset"

The units that you study present information, concepts and theories. It is expected that you will understand these fully. In addition, you must think critically and analytically so that you can evaluate and apply the knowledge, concepts and theories to different situations. You also need to think about the information from international and global perspectives, and to communicate your thinking clearly and appropriately orally and in writing.

This means that you must do more in your written work than merely describe the concepts and knowledge, which will not get you good marks. There are times when you do need to provide definitions and an overview of concepts and theories, but such information usually only functions as an introduction for your integration of ideas, critical analysis and application, in relation to the issue, topic and task.

Integration of information and critical and analytical thinking are central to the idea of independence in study. It means that you take an objective approach to the knowledge, concepts and theories. Such an approach is necessary so that you can:

- Integrate sometimes contrasting ideas from a range of sources and develop your own perspective on an issue or topic in relation to these;
- 'Pull apart' the knowledge in your units and explain how the parts all work together (analysis);
- Evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, advantages and disadvantages of knowledge, concepts and theories for particular situations (critical approach).

This emphasis may differ from how you approached your study in other educational settings. For instance, you may have expected there to be one right answer, or two sides to an issue or topic. In your university studies, you need to understand that there are multiple views surrounding a topic or issue. The suitability of the view that you develop, often by synthesising several views, depends on the perspective from which you look at the issue.

Such a concept of the relativity of knowledge applies to all the business and economics disciplines. In accounting, for instance, particular accounting situations are interpreted in terms of the Standard Accounting Concepts, and in econometrics and business statistics, a set of data is interpreted in relation to a particular purpose, or the needs of a particular user.

Your ability to operate in the way explained above is based on you understanding the nature of academic enquiry and discovery, as we explain in the next section.

## 2.2 Academic enquiry, discovery and independence in study

Academic enquiry and discovery are concerned with the development or advancement of knowledge in a field of study, which occurs through research and investigation. Students engage in academic enquiry and discovery, to some degree, when they integrate and apply knowledge, concepts and theories to different situations. Thus, in university study, there are:

- No absolutes
- Knowledge evolves as researchers challenge, confirm or modify earlier understandings.

When investigating an issue for an assignment task that is based on evidence from the literature, you need to overview and integrate the range of views surrounding the issue or topic. When you have formed your response and structured your written work to express this, you must indicate to your reader how you have arrived at that view. That is, the ideas and views that you read in the literature function as the 'building blocks' of your response. In your writing, if you do not explain to your reader the evidence or the building blocks for your view, you are only expressing opinions. These are ideas unsubstantiated by evidence and are not valued in university study.

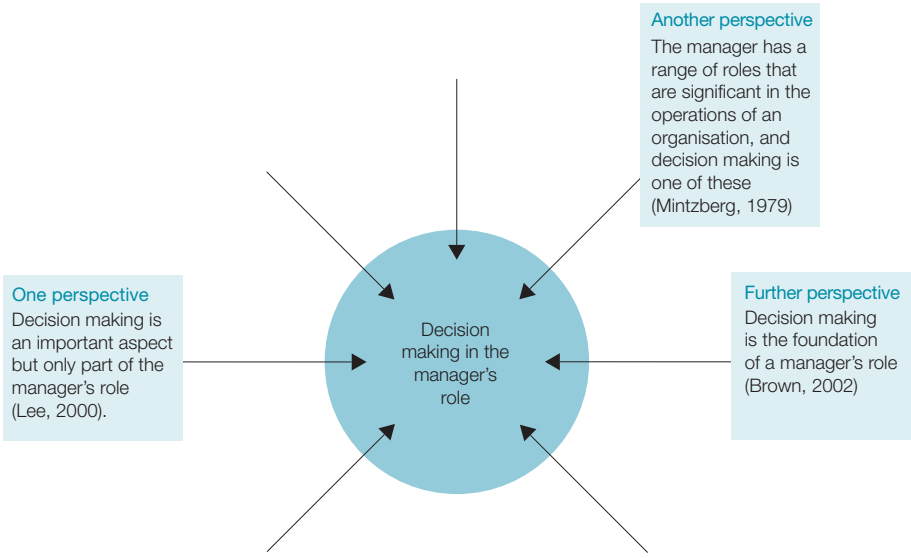
Another perspective
The manager has a range of roles that are significant in the operations of an organisation, and decision making is one of these (Mintzberg, 1979)
One perspective
Decision making is an important aspect but only part of the manager's role (Lee, 2000).
Decision making in the manager's role
Further perspective
Decision making is the foundation of a manager's role (Brown, 2002)

**Figure 1: Multiple views of a topic or issue**

*Figure 1* depicts the situation in relation to a topic in a unit that relies on views in the literature. Note how decision-making in the manager's role is seen from different perspectives by different authors.

In a unit such as econometrics and business statistics, you may be required to analyse a set of data from a perspective of, for instance, a marketing manager, or a city council. Thus, the information in the data that would be relevant for the former would be on aspects such as sales, while for the city council which is concerned with providing services, the emphasis would be on the city's population and its needs.

Thus, in units that rely on data such as econometrics and business statistics, you need to analyse the data, form a perspective on the issue from the data analysis, and then select from your data to support the viewpoint you have developed.

In a unit such as economics, it means being able to distinguish between facts and value statements.

## 2.3 Approaching study in the faculty disciplines

As you continue with your faculty study, you will realise that the approaches to knowledge in the disciplines of the faculty differ in some ways. Understanding such variation will help you adjust your thinking and approach across your units of study. This is particularly applicable if you are a double degree student and studying across two faculties.

For instance, when you are studying a first year law unit in your Business and Economics degree, you will be presented with problem question assignments. You approach and think about these, and structure information differently, than you would for essays in a unit such as management, or, for example, reports in a marketing unit. You are using different forms of data and evidence, and applying critical analysis in ways that are particular to the unit and its discipline.

The approach that the disciplines take to knowledge is reflected in the way information is put together in the texts and in lectures. These exemplify the characteristics of the particular discipline.

To develop some understanding, you should think about your units in terms of:

- The type of data and information used;
- The way data and information is integrated, analysed and critiqued;
- The way data and information is used as evidence in addressing issues and topics;
- The way data and information is presented in written form.

This will help you to develop the appropriate 'mindset', or 'way of looking at the world' that is characteristic of the discipline that you are studying and writing in.

In the next sections of this chapter, we discuss learning through lectures, tutorials, reading, and working with your class mates. This will help you to study efficiently and effectively.

## 2.4 Lectures and your learning

If you are an on-campus student lectures are a very important part of your learning. Broadly speaking, the lecture provides you with the general layout and important approaches for your topic for the week. Often, you will also be engaged in the lectures in activities that will deepen and expand your understanding of the topic. This will save you time in the long run, as you will leave the lecture with greater understanding of the topic, providing you with a clearer direction for your further work and study on the topic and the subject.

Even though you may be able to download Powerpoint slides, you should attend your lectures. The slides usually only provide a framework of the topic. It is in the lecture that fuller explanations and activities to increase your understanding and knowledge are provided. Attending lectures also helps you to feel part of the faculty and the university by giving you the opportunity to develop networks with other students. You will probably find that even a brief discussion of an aspect of the topic with a fellow student will help your understanding.

To get the most out of lectures, you should approach them in a systematic way. This means preparing before the lecture and following up on your understanding after it.

## 2.4.1 Preparing for the lecture

As we have already explained, the units you study have different styles and emphases, as do your unit lecturers.

You may feel 'lost' when you begin a unit because the ideas, and the language used to express them, are new and unknown. It may also take time to orient yourself to your lecturers' individual styles of communication. If you are an international student recently arrived in Australia, you may have difficulty initially understanding the Australian accent. Some of your lecturers may also have accents from other language backgrounds, which will take time for you to get used to. It is important in these situations to be *active* rather than *passive* by preparing for the lecture.

Ways that you can prepare before the lecture are:

- Reading about the topic from the materials listed in the unit outline;
- Using Powerpoint slides for the lecture downloaded from the net as a guide for your preparation;
- Thinking about the topic in relation to the subject;
- Talking to your classmates about the topic and the subject.

## 2.4.2 Reading before the lecture

Before the lecture, you should try to get an overview of the points and issues to be discussed from your reading. Not all items on the reading list need to be read in full at this stage. Your purpose is to gain an overview of the ideas, vocabulary and phrases related to the topic. The text for the unit may be the most appropriate item for your pre-reading.

You can also make a list, or glossary, of any new vocabulary and language which are specific to the unit, writing the meanings next to these.

If English is not your first language, this practice will help you to become familiar with the topic's specific language and concepts and is invaluable preparation. You may not have heard such language in spoken form before, especially with an Australian accent!

## 2.4.3 Using Powerpoint slides

Students may think that the lecture slides will provide them with all they need to know about the topic and therefore not attend lectures. The slides however, are not a substitute for lecture attendance and usually only include the topic's main points. If the slides are available before the lecture, you can use these to advantage in *preparing* for the lecture. You should aim to:

- Preview the slides to get an overview of the topic.
- Use the slides in your pre-lecture reading to guide you to the relevant information for the topic.
- Print out the slides (perhaps 2 per page) and fill in the details in the lectures.

## 2.4.4 Thinking about the topic and the subject

The topics that you cover in your weekly program build up to form a wide and deep view of the unit. Placing the topics into the overall unit structure will help you study with understanding and meaning. This underpins your ability to integrate ideas and to think critically and analytically about your study material, as well as to evaluate and apply it to new situations in assignment and exam questions.

Thus, you should try to build a picture of the unit as a whole in your study. You can do this by:

- Being aware of the objectives for your unit (presented in the Unit Guide) and relating your topics from week to week to these objectives.
- Thinking about your topics from week to week, and asking yourself how they relate to each other, and to the unit objectives overall.

In this way, you are not studying isolated pieces of information. You are seeking meaning and understanding. This approach will most likely mean that you will find your study more interesting and enjoyable because it makes more sense to you. If you are motivated in this way, you will probably get better grades in your studies (Biggs, 2000).

### 2.4.5 Talking to your classmates about your weekly topics

Many students find it useful to form study groups with a few classmates and meet informally for an hour or so each week, before or after the lecture. It is a good use of time and there are several advantages. With your study group friends, you can:

- Clarify any material or concepts you do not understand.
- Explain to your friends things they do not understand. Doing so often leads to better understanding on your part.
- If the group meets after the lecture, fill in any details in the notes missed in the lecture, and clarify understanding of the topic and information covered.

It is *very important* to note, however, that *all* assignment work you submit *must be your own. There are severe penalties for copying and plagiarising the work of others. This is discussed more fully in Chapter 9.* If the line is clearly drawn between studying together and learning from each other in the way we have explained above and individual assignment work, there are many advantages to collaborative learning.

## 2.5 Taking notes in the lecture

You should take an *active* rather than *passive* approach to note taking. This will enable you to work efficiently and effectively, and get maximum benefit from your study time.

There is no one 'correct' way to take notes. You need to develop a style that suits your way of studying. For instance, some students like to take a lot of notes, whereas others record only key words and points and mainly listen to the lecture to assist their understanding. In developing your own style, it is useful to consider other students' styles. In a study group, you can look at each others' styles, and learn from each other. However, the following points will assist you as you are developing your style.

You should always arrive at the lecture on time. In the introduction, the lecturer often overviews the learning objectives and the material to be covered, most often linking it to the previous week's lecture. This helps you form a framework or structure in your mind for the details that follow, helping you to better understand and situate the information within the context of the unit.

If English is not your first language and you are not yet familiar with the Australian accent, you should try to sit close to the front in the lecture. In this way, the lecturer's body language and facial expressions help you understand the spoken message.

Use a note-pad to take notes. You should not take notes on scraps of paper. Make sure the layout of your notes is clear. You should include any relevant information regarding the source of your notes. For instance, it is a good idea to write down the unit, the date of the lecture, the lecture's title, and the lecturer's name.

If you download Powerpoint slides for the lecture, make sure there is ample room around the slides on the paper to record all necessary notes.

### 2.5.1 Recognising and recording the main points

You should not try to write down all the lecturer's words. Aim to record in your own words the main points and key information. The structure will be available for you if you use Powerpoint slides, or prepared lecture notes. If these are not available, you need to recognise this structure and build it into you lecture notes.

Overall, the lecture will be largely structured around main points and sub-points. You need to build this outline into your notes. If you are using linear notes, you can underline the main points, indent the sub-points, and use numbers for the 'sub- sub-points', and so on.

As well as the structure of ideas, information that makes up the lecture serves different purposes. Following are some of the purposes, which the lecturer will usually signal with language phrases (examples of language signals are in brackets):

- Introducing main points: should be recorded in abbreviated form. ("The first main point concerns…");
- Rephrasing of main points: help you to understand, but do not need recording. ("So, what I'm saying here is that …");
- Illustrating points: do not need recording. A key word in your notes may remind you of the example. ("An example that comes to mind is …");
- Digressing: does not need recording. Places the point into a larger context, perhaps adding interest to the lecture ("An interesting aside at this point is…");
- Moving to the next point: lets you know that the following information is key to the topic, and you should record it. ("Following from …, the next main point is …");
- Summing up main points: not necessary to record. ("To sum up what I've been saying, …")

The lecturer's voice and body language which accompany the language cues will help you to recognise the purpose of the information in the overall lecture structure. For instance, for a main point, this may mean:

- A pause before beginning;
- Emphasis in the lecturer's voice;
- More formal body language.

In contrast, the language style for less important examples and digressions may be more informal and colloquial, and the body language more relaxed.

## 2.5.2 Using abbreviations

A system of note taking abbreviations will mean that you are not constantly writing words in full. Examples of abbreviation techniques include:

- Shortening words. For example, the word 'consumer' used often in marketing can be abbreviated to 'consmr', 'dev.' for develop, and so on.
- Use mathematical signs, such as =, +, …, arrows, for example, for 'increase', or down for 'decrease'.
- Use △ for change

## 2.5.3 Learning styles

An implicit point from our discussion above is that different students feel more comfortable with particular approaches to, and styles of learning. For instance, some students require quiet environments for their study, while others prefer to listen to music as they work. Some students prefer to learn from written materials, and complement this with their lectures, tutorials, and electronic learning materials. Other students prefer to focus on the electronic, and to complement it with other forms of learning. Similarly, some students prefer to begin their study from a broad, or global perspective of the topic, while others prefer to begin with the details, and build up to a global view.

It is useful to try out different ways of learning, so as to broaden your study approach. If you have previously learnt mainly from reading and note taking, complement this with discussion with classmates, and use of electronic learning resources. If you have previously mainly focused on the details of a topic, try to place these into a global perspective of the topic, and if you initially take a global view, complement this with the topic details.

Regardless of what your preference is, it is important for you to exercise independence and self reliance, and try to establish your own learning style. The best way to develop and assess what learning style to adopt should be based on the extent to which it helps you to function in your studies with meaning and understanding, so that you can integrate, critically analyse and apply information and ideas effectively, and achieve the highest possible results in your assessment work.

On the other hand, independence and self reliance in study also mean that you recognise if your learning style is ineffective, and you are not understanding or performing well in your units of study. While at times lecturers or tutors may alert students to their inappropriate styles, in the end, the onus is on students themselves to reflect on and develop appropriate learning styles. On campus learning and personal support staff (see link in Introduction) are also available to assist students requiring help with particular issues or challenges.

### 2.5.4 Managing visual and spoken information

Many students find it difficult initially to balance the lecturer's spoken language with the written information on overhead slides. We emphasise again that it is not necessary to write down all the lecturer's words, nor all the information on the overheads. Only the key information is usually required.

To cope with both sources of information, it is useful to decide from which of these you gain the most, and use this as your main source. The other can then be used to deepen understanding, and as back up. For instance, if you are most comfortable with the visual information on slides, base your note taking on this, and use the spoken text for more detailed information. On the other hand, if you are more comfortable with the spoken language, use the visual to help you discern the main points and key ideas.

### 2.5.5 Losing concentration in the lecture

The key point here is not to panic. If you lose the thread of the lecture, simply leave a space, and continue taking notes from that point on. You can check your text, or fill in the details from a friend's notes after the lecture.

## 2.6 After the lecture

Knowledge in your units of study is developmental, meaning that understandings build on those presented earlier. It is therefore important that you keep up to date with your understandings of the topics and the unit overall. If there are concepts or ideas about which you are unclear, you can follow these up in your study group, from the text, or from your tutor's consultation time.

Try to make summaries of your lectures, either after the lecture, or at the end of the week. Not only is this a way to check that you have understood the lecture, it will also be useful in preparation for your exams when you need to review all the material covered in the unit. It will save you time in the long run.

You can make lecture summaries by:

- Writing a half-page summary;
- Making dot point lists of the lecture;
- Drawing a diagram or mindmap of the main topic, sub-points and so on.

## 2.7 Tutorials and your learning

Tutorials are one of the other important ways through which you learn in your university studies. Just as it is important to attend the lectures, you also need to attend tutorials. In fact, many units allocate some assessment marks for attendance and participation.

The tutorial usually is a group session, where the leader for the session is the tutor. Students are usually expected to participate in the tutorials by entering into the discussion and experiential activities.

The key to being able to participate is being prepared for the topic. Depending on the nature of the unit, preparing may mean:

- Reading, making sure you understand the concepts, ideas and theories;
- Completing exercises;
- Being prepared to discuss issues and answer questions;
- Being prepared to make comments and ask questions.

Initially, many students sometimes find it difficult to participate in tutorials. For instance, students with English as a second language may feel that their accent and expression styles are different from native English speakers, and so may be hesitant in speaking in tutorials. It is useful to remember that you are not alone and that many students, including local students with English as a first language, also find it difficult to participate in the beginning. Despite initial feelings of un-ease, you do need to learn how to participate by developing questioning, answering and commenting skills that are suitable for tutorial discussion. This will help you develop oral communication skills that are most important for the workplace when you graduate.

The most significant point is to try to express your point clearly. This is more important than having absolutely faultless English grammar and syntax. When you have developed confidence in expressing yourself, you can then seek to tighten up on grammar.

If you feel shy about participating, the best way to prepare yourself is to think of likely questions, and compose answers to these before the tutorial. You can never predict the exact questions that will be asked, but thinking in this way helps you to develop a flexible approach to the information of your study. In study groups with your class mates, you can practise asking questions and providing answers.

You then need to be alert for opportunities in the tutorial to participate. It may mean letting your tutor see that you want to respond or comment, by, for instance, looking alert, sitting forward, or raising your hand. It is also important to approach tutorials as spaces where students and teachers are aware, respectful and considerate of others, and every member's contribution to the learning environment is valued.

## 2.8 Reading in your study

Reading is another important way that you learn at university. The purpose of your reading can be to overview information before a lecture, to prepare for a tutorial, to read widely on a topic, or to find specific information for an assignment topic. Regardless of your purpose, an *active* rather than a *passive* approach is required. An active approach, in the first place, means that you read in a way for your particular purpose. For instance, if you are reading for an overview and therefore to acquaint yourself with main ideas, you read differently from if you are reading to understand material fully and in great detail.

Overall, we may say that reading in your studies is for the following purposes:

- Reading to *comprehend*. ("What is the writer saying?")
- Reading for *integration of ideas, critical analysis and evaluation*. (What is the writer *doing* when they are saying it?)

Both types of reading are required, and are interrelated. For instance, you cannot integrate ideas and critically analyse a view expressed by a writer in a written document if you do not understand or comprehend the view being put forward.

Regardless of the purpose, both types of reading require you to overview your document first. This will provide you with a framework, or structure, for the details that follow, thus helping you to maintain concentration and get the most benefit from your reading time.

Surveying or developing an overview, means that you:

- Read the title, headings and sub-headings throughout the piece.
- Read the Introduction and Conclusion to the piece.
- Read the headings and sub-headings throughout the piece.
- Think about/form a preliminary view of what the article is about.
- Use this information to form a framework for your more detailed reading.

## 2.8.1 Reading to understand or comprehend

**"What is the writer saying?"**

After surveying the piece as we have explained above, you then need to read in detail to understand the writer's point of view. Rather than just reading and absorbing the information in a passive way, you should always be asking yourself:

**"What is the writer saying/what is the writer's point here?"**

A point may be expressed in one paragraph, or may cover a couple, or several paragraphs.
This means that you are following and understanding the development of the writer's viewpoint.

Sometimes reading material can be expressed in very academic and sophisticated language. It will help you to understand if you try to decode the writer's point, and express it to yourself in simple language.

In your note taking, you extract and record the main ideas and key points. You should try to *express these in your own words*, rather than simply highlighting or underlining them. Extracting the key information requires you to understand the material, and this helps to maintain your concentration as you read.

If you are making notes from a written source (e.g. book or article) you should include the following information, which is required for referencing purposes:

1. Name of author
2. Publication date
3. Title of the text
4. Name of publisher
5. City of publication
6. Page numbers.

Software, such as EndNote, is available from the library to help you manage and use your citations throughout your studies.

### 2.8.2 Reading for critical comment

When you understand the view that the writer is presenting, you are able to look at it from a critical and analytical perspective.

In a succinct form, critical comment is based on the following question:

**"What is the writer doing when they are putting forward information?"**

This means being able to evaluate the view, in relation to your assignment task or topic. Questions you can ask yourself about the piece include:

- What was the writer saying?
- What were the writer's findings?
- In what ways are the writer's views similar and different?
- What does such similarity and difference mean?
- In what areas would the research and the writer's views not apply?
- Do the writer's views and findings apply to the task?
- In what ways/to what degree are the writer's views relevant for the task?
- If so, how are the writer's findings relevant to the task?
- If not, why are the findings not relevant to the task?
- Based on your reading, what do you think about the similarities and differences in the reading?

Separate your notes from your personal comments. Given that you may look back at your notes, it will be impossible for you to distinguish your comments from your notes, so keep them separate.

Write a summary of your notes, or draw a diagram of the structure of the lecture. This will ensure that you understand the points and their inter-relationship as presented in the lecture.

## 2.9 Checklist for studying faculty units and courses

It is important that you study to 'understand' and be able to apply information and ideas to a range of situations. To be able to do this, you need to approach your studies in a way where you look for links in, and across, the content of your units. This contrasts with merely trying to memorise information, or learn by rote. While it is necessary to learn some processes and concepts for your units of study, a memorising approach on its own will not assist you to do well in your studies. It will also be difficult for you to be motivated. Studies show that students who look for meaning and links are more highly motivated than those who do not, and therefore are better placed to do well in their units and courses of study (Biggs, 2000).

- Establish semester and weekly timetables for your study. Allocate time in your weekly timetable for keeping up to date with your studies, and for completing your assignments.
- Be prepared to study six days per week. (Remember, you should be devoting 2–3 hours of private study for each hour you attend in the lecture or tutorial.) You can then plan ahead to have your assignments completed by the due date, and keep up to date with your weekly study.
- You should also, in due course, be working through past exam papers to give you insight into the relevant standard of work to help you to revise for the exam.

Reference:

Biggs, J. (2000), *Teaching for Quality Learning at University*, Open University Press, Buckingham.

# Chapter 3
# The research process: A basic guide

## Introduction

The aim of this section is to introduce a process for planning and conducting efficient and effective research that will save you time and effort in locating and using information to complete your assignments. The following sections provide a general introduction and key points. For more information and advice, including details of information skills and learning skills training sessions, consult staff at a library information desk, or refer to the Monash University Library home page: http://www.lib.monash.edu.au/.

The library information desk staff can advise on which particular resources are most relevant for your topic. The library also conducts a range of information skills training sessions, including: library familiarisation tours; using the catalogue; effective database searching; researching on the Internet; undertaking thesis literature reviews; and using EndNote software.

## 3.1 The research process

The research process consists of seven steps:

1. Understand the assignment topic/question(s)
2. Decide what sort of information you need to complete the assignment
3. Decide where to look for this information
4. Develop and use a search strategy
5. Evaluate the information found and revise the plan as necessary
6. Presentation
7. Final evaluation

### 3.1.1 Step 1: Understand the assignment topic/question(s)

Clarify terms or concepts in the topic in order to ensure a clear understanding of what you are required to do. What type of assignment is it? Is it an essay, case study, literature review or a report?

Consult the following sources:

- Text books specified on your unit reading list
- Business encyclopedias and dictionaries. e.g. *International Encyclopedia of Business and Management*, and *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Management* (which is also available online)
- Lecture notes and unit Web pages
- Your tutor or lecturer

An assignment topic may consist of a number of questions. Treat each question as an individual search for information. This will make your research more manageable. Be aware of any limits that apply to the topic/question, for example, “the *Australian* market”, or “trends over the *last five years*”. For some assignments you may be required to develop your own questions, or to choose your own topic.

### 3.1.2 Step 2: Decide what sort of information you need to complete the assignment

- The information you require may include: definitions, news reports, company financial information, demographic statistics, macroeconomic data, country information, legislation, legal commentary, information on industry/market trends, business case studies, theoretical perspectives.

- Brainstorm to identify what you already know about the topic, and to pinpoint gaps in your knowledge.
- Decide what level of detail you require – brief or in-depth. This will depend on the required length of the assignment and relative weighting given to different parts of the topic within the assignment.
- Usually you will need a variety of information types to appropriately respond to a question, for example: Apply *theories* of conflict resolution and give *practical illustrations* of their application.
- Your lecturer may require you to use specific kinds of sources (for example, "refer to at least eight academic journal articles").
- Bring a copy of the assignment question with you when seeking help at a library information desk.

### 3.1.3 Step 3: Decide where to look for this information

Except for the simplest of questions (e.g. obtaining a definition), you will usually need to refer to a range of information resources. The resources below can be accessed via the library home page: http://www.lib.monash.edu.au/, which includes links to the catalogue and the database menu.

Types of resources provided by Monash University Library:

- **Reference** – includes encyclopedias, dictionaries, statistics, legislation and cases, handbooks and atlases. To find them, search the library catalogue.
- **Journals** – articles and information on specialist topics, many of which can be accessed on the Internet via the library databases.
- **Books** – including textbooks and academic titles. Use the library catalogue to find them. An increasing number of books are available online, via the library catalogue.
- **Online reading lists** – electronic versions of lecturers' reading lists, including links to full text journal articles and book chapters.
- **Internet sites** – the library selects and provides access to academic quality Internet sites via the catalogue and library web pages.
- **Databases** – most heavily used for searching for journal and news articles.

The full range of specialist business and economics databases includes company information, industry reports, country reports, legal materials, statistics and economic data. Almost all of these databases are available online.

The following step in the research process focuses on the basic principles of database searching.

### 3.1.4 Step 4: Develop and use a search strategy for database searching

The most heavily used library databases provide access to journal and news articles, which are key information sources for many assignments. Effective and efficient database (and catalogue) searching depends on using an effective search strategy. This involves planning the search in an organised way and subsequently modifying the initial search to extract the most relevant information.

As databases vary in content and focus, it is important to select the databases that are most relevant to your topic. While different databases use different search interfaces, the search strategy development described below is applicable to any database, and reflects the basic principles of effective database search design.

The search strategy process comprises seven steps:

**1. State the topic**

e.g. Is employer monitoring of workplace e-mail justified?
(Use journal articles to support your view)

**2. Identify the key concepts**

monitoring workplace e-mail

**3. List other ways of expressing these key concepts**

for example: – synonyms, including American terminology
(e.g. mobile telephones, cellular telephones)
– plural/singular (e.g. woman, women)
– spelling (e.g. behaviour, behavior)
– variations of a root word (e.g. strategy, strategic)
– acronyms (e.g. CEO, chief executive officer)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. monitor(ing) | spy(ing) | |
| 2. workplace | employee(s) | |
| 3. e-mail | email | electronic mail |

**4. For each key concept, link its keywords with OR to widen the search.**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. monitor* | or | spy* | |
| 2. workplace | or | employee* | |
| 3. e-mail | or | email | or electronic mail |

The **truncation symbol**,* , will include variations of the word, e.g. searching for monitor* will find: monitor, monitors, monitoring, monitored. (Different databases may use different truncation symbols, e.g. '?' – check the online help for the particular database.)

**5**. Link each key concept set with **AND**, to obtain records which contain at least one term from each set. The complete search statement to be entered in the database search engine is: (monitor* or spy*) and (workplace or employee*) and (e-mail or email or electronic mail). **AND** and **OR** are referred to as **Boolean operators**, and such searches are referred to as **Boolean searches**.

**6. Evaluate the records retrieved from the search**

Look at the records retrieved from your search. If no records, or very few, are found, check for spelling mistakes in your search terms. Confirm whether the database is relevant to your topic (e.g. some international databases may have only limited Australian content, or the database may not cover the time period you are researching).

Identify any terms within the records (especially **Subject** terms or headings) that you could use to improve on the initial search. Subject terms (sometimes called descriptors) describe the main content of the article, and using them is a powerful way of focusing a search to obtain records of greater relevance to the topic.

You should also assess the **quality** of the articles retrieved.
Evaluation guidelines are covered in **Step 5** of the research process, **Evaluate the information found and revise the plan**.

**7. Modify the original search and evaluate the new results.**

To focus the search more closely: reduce the OR terms (i.e. synonyms and related terms), or add a further concept with AND

To broaden the search: increase the OR terms, or reduce the AND terms.

## 3.1.5 Step 5: Evaluate the information found and revise the plan

This section presents criteria for assessing the relevance and the quality of the information found, regardless of its format (for example, a book, journal article, news report, Web pages). This evaluation is the basis for planning the next phase of the research.

### 3.1.5.1 General evaluation considerations

- **Relevance and coverage**

  Does the material provide information relevant to the topic, and in the detail you need?

  Does it build on your previous research, or just confirm what you found in other sources?

  Are there any references to further potentially useful information?

  Are any new topic-related questions or issues raised in the material?

- **Who is the intended audience?**

  Information that is aimed at high school students and the general public may not be at an appropriate level for a university essay. Equally, some academic research may be too specific or specialised for your needs.

- **Is the information up to date?**

  This will be of particular importance if you need to research the most recent developments in a field. In the case of a Web site, is it still being maintained, or are many of the links broken?

- **Is the author an authority on the subject matter?**

  Is the author a recognised expert in the field that you are researching?

  Is sufficient information presented about the author to verify his or her expertise (e.g. is he or she a member of a relevant university department?)

- **Accuracy**

  Does the work contain obvious mistakes, or poor editing? Where possible, check the information presented for consistency with other sources. Are the sources of information within the work acknowledged?

- **Objectivity**

  Look for any apparent bias in the work – this may be evident in the presentation of extreme viewpoints and in the use of emotive or derogatory language. Look also for omissions in information presented and information that contradicts established facts.

### 3.1.5.2 Criteria for evaluating academic material

Lecturers often require students to find and use information from academic journals (also referred to as scholarly journals) and academic papers. Check articles or papers you intend to use in your assignment against the following criteria. The more criteria a particular article or paper satisfies, the more likely it is to be acceptable for academic purposes.

- **Abstract, reference list or bibliography**

  Academic articles usually start with an abstract (summary) and end with a reference list or bibliography. The reference list is usually extensive and may run to several pages. The original print and then digitised version of an article may include an abstract provided by the author. (This is not always the same as the abstract provided by the producer of the database.)

  Check that complete bibliographic information for all cited references is provided.

- **Author affiliation, qualifications**

  Is the author affiliated to a university? If so, you may assume the article has some academic credibility. Are the authors' academic qualifications listed? Affiliation and qualification details are often found at the beginning of the article near the title or at the end of the article as an endnote. In a book of readings there may be a separate section with brief details on the contributors.

- **Appearance**

  The appearance should be text based, with minimal or no illustrations. Advertising is limited to scholarly or academic products and services, e.g. an upcoming conference, or new books in the discipline.

- **Format**

  The body of the document is divided into sections, such as Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Results, Discussion, Conclusion, Reference List. Tables, figures and charts may be included. In-text and end-text references may be included.

- **Voice**

  Academic work may use technical language (jargon) and may report empirical research, but it may also speculate on a theoretical issue. The writer assumes some knowledge and background on the part of the reader.

- **Length**

  Academic articles are usually substantial, i.e. eight or more pages.

- **Publisher**

  Often the publisher name can give you a clue as to the academic status of the document. For example, are they a university, professional organisation or other recognised authority producing research? Is the journal from a large academic publishing firm? Ask at a library information desk if you have a question about a particular journal or publisher.

- **Recommendation and peer review**

  Has the journal been recommended by your lecturer (for example, in the Unit Outline) or by another recognised authority? Lecturers will often require you to refer to peer reviewed journal articles in your assignments. Articles in peer reviewed academic journals have been assessed, prior to publication, as being worthy of inclusion in the journal by experts in that academic discipline. The use of peer review serves as an indicator of journal quality. Peer reviewed journals are sometimes referred to as "refereed" journals. Ask at a library information desk if you are unsure whether a particular journal is peer-reviewed.

### 3.1.5.3 Textbooks and academic books

You may be required to refer beyond textbooks and prescribed readings, and consult academic books (also referred to as scholarly books).

Textbooks provide an overview or introduction to a discipline (for example, management) or a sub-discipline (for example, human resource management), usually arranged as individual chapters on specific topics. For example, a human resource management textbook might include chapters on human resource planning, recruitment, and selection. Textbooks often contain student activities, case studies, discussion questions and other learning materials.

Academic books, in contrast to textbooks, provide a book length, in-depth discussion of a particular topic, e.g. *The Collapse of the American Management Mystique*. They seldom contain student directed activities and exercises.

Like journal articles, academic books result from detailed research, evidenced by referencing and bibliographies. Other evaluation criteria that apply to academic journals (as detailed above), such as voice, appearance, publisher and author qualifications and affiliation also apply to academic books.

Some academic books comprise chapters or articles contributed by different academic authors and compiled by an editor, which focus on a particular topic.

If you are unsure about whether a particular article or book meets the required academic standard, ask your lecturer or tutor.

#### 3.1.5.4 Recording and planning your ongoing research

Keep a record of your research progress (e.g. databases used, search strategies and search terms, and evaluation of search results) in order to effectively plan the next stages in your research.

Identify the gaps that still remain in the information you require, and potential leads to further information from your research so far.

Based on your evaluation, modify and repeat the previous steps in the research process as many times as necessary, to systematically gather more information.

It may sometimes be necessary to return to Step 1 of the process to revise or refine your understanding of the topic. This repetition is fundamental to conducting research.

### 3.1.6 Step 6: Presentation

Report and assignment writing, oral presentations, plagiarism and referencing are covered extensively in other sections of the ***Q Manual***.

It is important to maintain accurate citations of the material that you will refer to in your academic work. Download or print out a copy of relevant database or catalogue records to keep an accurate record of the full citation details.

EndNote software can be downloaded from the library Web site to help you manage and use your references. EndNote is highly recommended to students undertaking a thesis.

The library runs regular EndNote classes, for details refer to http://www.lib.monash.edu.au/.

As changes to Internet sites occur quite frequently, it is recommended that you print a copy of any sites or material of special interest as you are conducting your search to ensure that you have all the relevant details, including the URL and date that you accessed the material.

The library collections include guides to writing reports, assignments and theses, and on giving presentations. Check the library catalogue for details.

Learning Skills Advisers in the library can provide advice on planning and writing assignments, presentations skills and referencing.

### 3.1.7 Step 7: Final evaluation

The key success criterion of your research is whether you have answered the question(s) such as those set at Step 1. It is also useful to consider your experience of the research *process*, by reflecting on such questions as:

- What have you learned about the process of searching for and using information?
- What information resources (for example, databases, encyclopedias) might be useful in future research (for example, in assignments for other units)?
- How might you improve the way you conduct future research?

By keeping a record of your research as you explore a particular topic you will not only be able to assess and plan your research efforts, but also reflect upon and expand your knowledge and experience of using particular information resources, and research techniques.

## 3.2 Using the Internet for research

The Internet presents particular challenges when conducting academic research because of its:

- large and continually expanding volume and variety of information
- lack of any overall organisation or structure
- extreme variation in information quality, because anybody with the resources and capability is free to add information to the Internet.

**Before attempting an Internet search, check whether the particular information you need might be available on the library databases.**

A wide range of academic-quality documents (especially journal articles) and data (e.g. detailed company financial data, market research and analysis) can **only** be obtained from specialist databases, to which the library subscribes for the use of Monash staff and students.

These databases are **not** accessible via a general (e.g. Google) Internet search. They collectively provide a large collection of discipline-specific, authoritative and up to date material that can be efficiently searched using powerful search engines. The library databases can be accessed via the library's home page: http://www.lib.monash.edu.au/.

The Internet can be a useful source of information of an academic standard, especially where currency is important (for example, government reports, media releases, transcripts of speeches, podcasts of programs, statistics and academic working papers). Your lecturer or tutor may recommend particular Internet sites or resources relevant to the unit or your research topic.

The Internet is a less useful source for information that is unlikely to be free, at least in a complete form (for example, detailed market reports) or for old issues of publications (for example, news articles from 10 years ago).

For brief factual information or a brief overview or definition, a print encyclopedia or dictionary may be more convenient and/or authoritative.

### 3.2.1 Some further tips for productive Internet research

- Develop and use a search strategy, as you would when using a library database.
- Identify organisations that are recognised authorities on your topic, and go to their web sites (e.g. for economics and finance topics, the Reserve Bank of Australia site includes research, publications, statistics, media releases and transcripts of the Governor's speeches).
- Google has an Advanced Search option (as do some other search engines). Choose it to search more effectively and efficiently than is possible just using Basic Search. Read the search engine online help to become familiar with its capabilities and the way it presents results.
- Use limits (for example, date or domain) as appropriate. When searching for information from the Australian government, specifying the domain: *gov.au*, will restrict the search to only Australian government sites. Similarly, limiting to *edu.au* focuses the search on Australian university and other educational sites.
- Beware of inadvertently wasting time while searching the Internet. Sticking to a systematic search strategy will help you to be focussed and time efficient.
- Be especially rigorous in evaluating the quality of material found on the Internet. As a guide, refer to **Step 5** of the research process, **Evaluate the information found and revise the plan.**
- When you have found a useful site, check for links from that site to related sites, which are likely to provide information of a similar quality to the original site.
- Try other search engines. The database of each search engine can represent only a part of the total content of the Internet, so by using more than one search engine you can widen your search.
- Searching Google Scholar (http://scholar.google.com/) for academic quality material can be a useful adjunct to searching the Monash journal and working paper databases.

**References**

Barker, E., Barrett, M. & Roberts, L. (2002). *Working communication*. Sydney: John Wiley & Sons.

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Eisenberg, M. B. & Berkowitz, R. E. (1990). *Information problem solving: The Big Six Skills approach to library and information instruction.* Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing.

Engle, M. (2002). *Distinguishing scholarly journals from other periodicals*. Retrieved October 25, 2002, from http://www.library.cornell.edu/okuref/research/skill20.html

Friedman, B. (2004). *Web search savvy: Strategies and shortcuts for online research*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

See also:

Monash University Library (2007). *Library online tutorials*. http://www.lib.monash.edu.au/tutorials/

# Chapter 4
# Academic writing skills

## Introduction

In your studies in business and economics disciplines, you will do substantial amounts of writing in assignment work. Writing is a significant part of assessment requirements and develops your ability to communicate clearly and appropriately in a range of settings. These are important skills that meet the university and faculty's learning aims, and are needed for the workplace. Your unit outlines often provide specific information about unit writing requirements.

As expressed above, writing is an important part of your studies because it:

- provides your tutors/lecturers with a view of your learning;
- develops your written communication skills, which are also very important for the workplace.

In your writing, you must demonstrate your ability to integrate ideas and information and critical and analytical thinking about the topic or issue. This means much more than just retelling or describing information. Integrating ideas and information means understanding that there are a range of views on issues and topics, and being able to reconcile these as you form your own response to a topic, issue or task. Being analytical means that you 'pull apart' the topic, and the information that you read on it, rather then accepting it on 'face value'. Critical thinking means that you evaluate, or judge the value of, material or data on the topic, for the purposes of your assignment task. You do this from the perspective of the material or data's contribution to your perspective on the issue.

## 4.1 Characteristics of successful writing

Successful academic writing communicates your message clearly to your examiner.
The following questions will help you to understand what constitutes a successful assignment response. Ask yourself the following questions about your assignment writing:

- Does it answer the question/respond to the task?
- Is it clearly structured?
- Does it express *your* perspective on the task and is it structured around this?
- Does it provide supportive evidence for your perspective with references and/or data?
- Does it 'hang together' well and present your perspective consistently and logically?
- Is it expressed clearly in sentences and paragraphs?

In the following sections of this chapter, we investigate each of the above requirements.

### 4.1.1 Responding to the task

You must address the assignment question; that is, you need to get to the heart of the task. This provides a direction for your research and development of a relevant response. This requires you to analyse your task carefully so that you are clear on what is being required. A 'quick read' to pick up the theme is not enough. It will not reveal to you the complexities and subtleties embedded in the task.

In responding to your assignment tasks, you are expected to read, understand, interpret, integrate and apply information. This means understanding the 'how' and 'why' of issues and topics. Writing that only explains the main themes and does not relate them in the way required by the task will not get good marks. Your ability to do this is based on an analytical understanding of the task.

Study the following tasks from Management, and Accounting and Finance. Follow the steps we have used in analysing them.

### 4.1.1.1 Assignment task, Management

The impact of the external environment on a manager's actions and behaviours cannot be over-emphasised. However, there are forces in the internal environment that continue to play a major role in shaping managers' endeavours. Use the interaction between some of the factors in both environments to explain how business organisations and managers are facing the challenges of the new global environment. Support your answer with examples.

### 4.1.1.2 Do an initial analysis of the task

An initial analysis will indicate to you that the task above has two major sections. This is seen in our analysis below. The Context is the setting. The Directions in the next section of the task tell you what you must do.

CONTEXT

The impact of the external environment on a manager's actions and behaviours cannot be over-emphasised. However, there are forces in the internal environment that continue to play a major role in shaping managers' endeavours.

DIRECTIONS

Use the interaction between some of the factors in both environments to explain how business organisations and managers are facing the challenges of the new global environment. Support your answer with examples.

### 4.1.1.3 Identify the key terms and directions

You need to identify the key terms, to which you will apply the directions. In our sample task, the key terms are **underlined and in bold**, and the ***directions are italicised and in bold***.

It is vital that you take note of the direction words and phrases. You must do what these ask.

The impact of the **external environment** on a **manager's actions and behaviours** cannot be over-emphasised. However, there are forces in the **internal environment** that continue to play a major role in shaping managers' endeavours. ***Use*** the **interaction** between some of the factors in both environments to ***explain*** how business organisations and managers are facing the challenges of the **new global environment.** ***Support your answer with examples.***

### 4.1.1.4 Summarise the task

You can see that key concepts in our task above are:

- the **interaction** of **external** and **internal environment** factors;
- **how** they **impact** on what a **manager does**.

Descriptive writing would merely explain what external and internal environmental factors are in the global business environment. It would not discuss how the external environment factors ***interact*** with the internal, and how they affect a manager's role.

In sum, this task is asking:

- How do external and internal environment factors interact in the global environment?
- How do these impact on organisations?
- How do aspects from the external environment shape what a manager does in the internal environment of the organisation?
- Give examples.

You should try to form a succinct summary of your task as we have done above. This directs you to the type of information you require and provides you with key terms for your library search.

## 4.2 Exam question, Accounting and Finance

**Outline the shortcomings of financial reporting as established in Statement of Accounting Concepts (SAC) 2. Explain how SAC3 overcomes these shortcomings.**

### 4.2.1 Initial analysis, key terms and directions

Your analysis of this task should indicate the following:

***Outline*** the **shortcomings** of the Statement of Accounting Concepts **(SAC) 2**.
***Explain*** how **SAC3 addresses these shortcomings.**

The words in bold italics are the ***direction words***.

The **underlined words and phrases** are the key terms.

From this analysis, you can see that there are two processes that need to be undertaken:

- ***Outline:*** provide an overview of
- ***Explain:*** give detailed explanation of

This question is asking you the following:

- What are the financial reporting objectives in SAC 2? What were the criticisms of SAC 2?
- Based on SAC 3, how should report information be presented?

You must answer both sections of this task. If you only answer one (for example, what the reporting objectives of SAC 2 are), you can only get a maximum of half the marks for the questions.

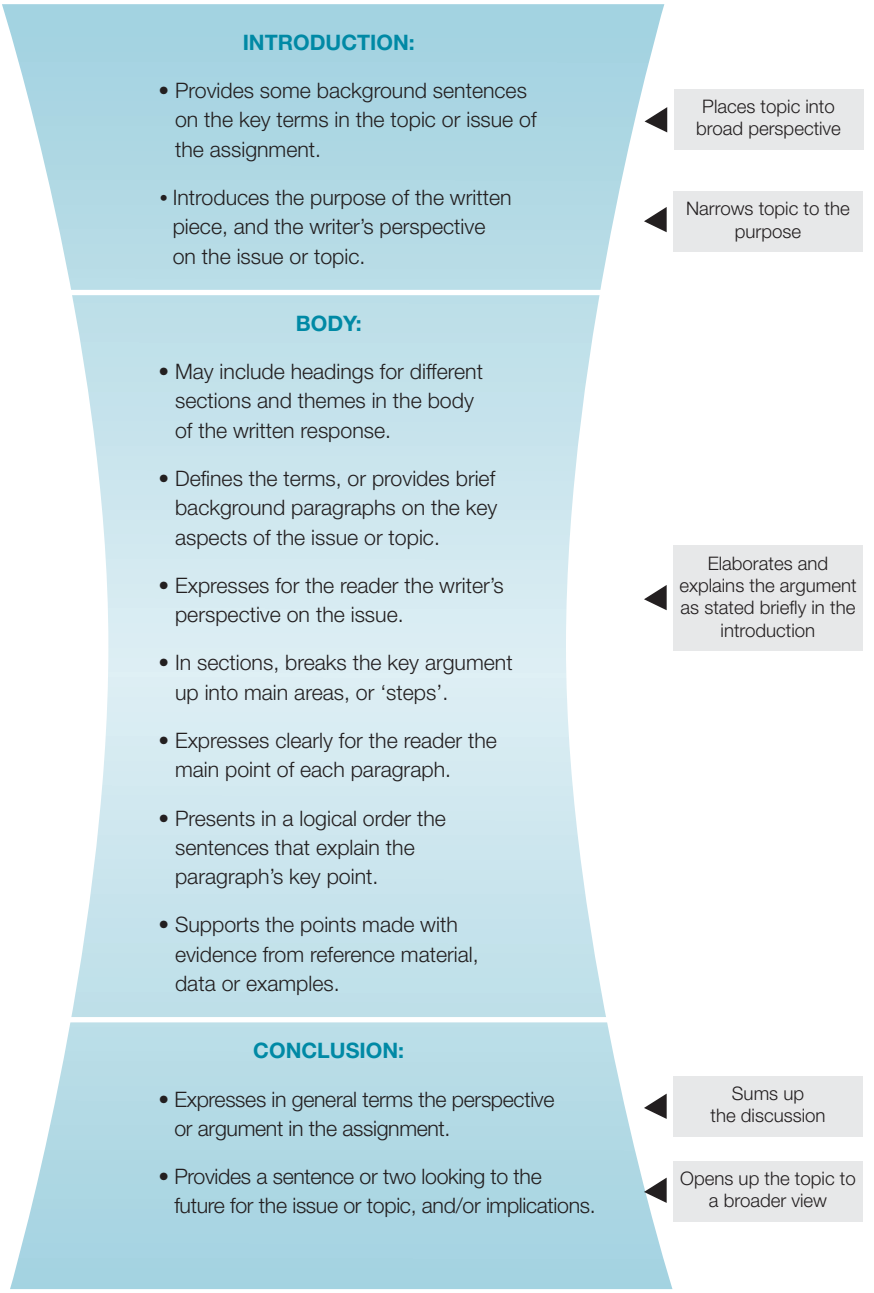
## 4.3 Structuring your writing clearly

You need to communicate your response clearly to your reader. Clear organisation of your ideas will facilitate this.

In general terms, many forms of communication are structured along the following lines. While there are differences in some structural aspects of an essay, a report, a response to a case study or a thesis, generally speaking, the following basic structure applies to all.

- **Introduction**
- **Body**
- **Conclusion**

## 4.3.1 Writing structure

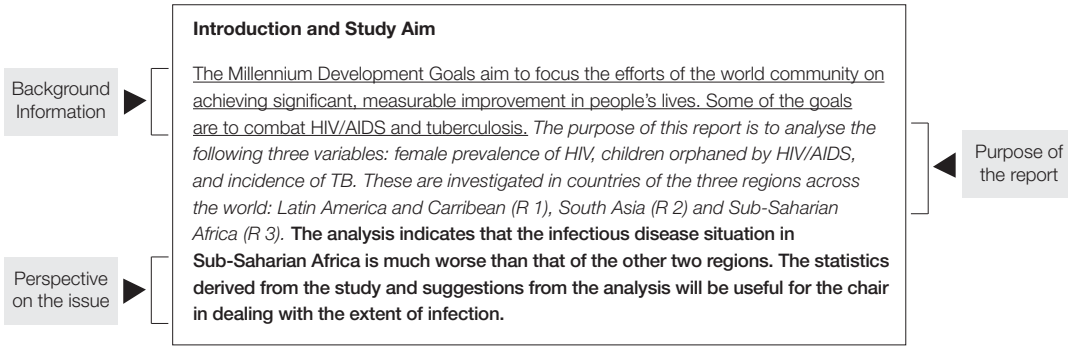

INTRODUCTION:
• Provides some background sentences on the key terms in the topic or issue of the assignment.
• Introduces the purpose of the written piece, and the writer's perspective on the issue or topic.
Places topic into broad perspective
Narrows topic to the purpose
BODY:
• May include headings for different sections and themes in the body of the written response.
• Defines the terms, or provides brief background paragraphs on the key aspects of the issue or topic.
• Expresses for the reader the writer's perspective on the issue.
• In sections, breaks the key argument up into main areas, or 'steps'.
• Expresses clearly for the reader the main point of each paragraph.
• Presents in a logical order the sentences that explain the paragraph's key point.
• Supports the points made with evidence from reference material, data or examples.
Elaborates and explains the argument as stated briefly in the introduction
CONCLUSION:
• Expresses in general terms the perspective or argument in the assignment.
• Provides a sentence or two looking to the future for the issue or topic, and/or implications.
Sums up the discussion
Opens up the topic to a broader view

### 4.3.1.1 Structure of an introduction

Study the Introduction below from a report for the unit, Econometrics and Business Statistics. Note how the ideas are organised and compare this with the suggestions for an introduction that we have provided above.

The Introduction:

- begins with background sentences on the topic (underlined)
- explains the purpose of the report *(italics)*
- presents the student's perspective on the issue, derived from an analysis of the data which is presented in the body of the report **(bold)**.


Background Information
Perspective on the issue
Purpose of the report
Introduction and Study Aim
The Millennium Development Goals aim to focus the efforts of the world community on achieving significant, measurable improvement in people's lives. Some of the goals are to combat HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis. The purpose of this report is to analyse the following three variables: female prevalence of HIV, children orphaned by HIV/AIDS, and incidence of TB. These are investigated in countries of the three regions across the world: Latin America and Carribean (R 1), South Asia (R 2) and Sub-Saharian Africa (R 3). The analysis indicates that the infectious disease situation in Sub-Saharian Africa is much worse than that of the other two regions. The statistics derived from the study and suggestions from the analysis will be useful for the chair in dealing with the extent of infection.

## 4.4 Forming and expressing your perspective on the task

You develop your own perspective on your assignment's topic or issue through reading, integrating and thinking about other views in the literature, or from analysing your data. To do this, keep your task in mind as you are reading, taking notes or interpreting data. At the back of your mind, ask yourself what the information means for your task. That is, how does it shape your viewpoint on the topic or issue?

When you have completed your reading, note-taking, analysis and thinking on the topic, try to form your own response or perspective. This is like a succinct, 'nut-shelled' answer to the problem embedded in the task, expressed in a sentence or two, or a few dot points. It provides a focus for your further planning and writing.

Regarding our Management essay task discussed earlier, your succinct response may be something like the following:

### 4.4.1 "Crystallised" response

> In the global environment, organisations need to … so that … This means that external environment factors such as … are important because … These interact with internal environment factors such as … Therefore, managers, as the … of organisations, need to … so that …

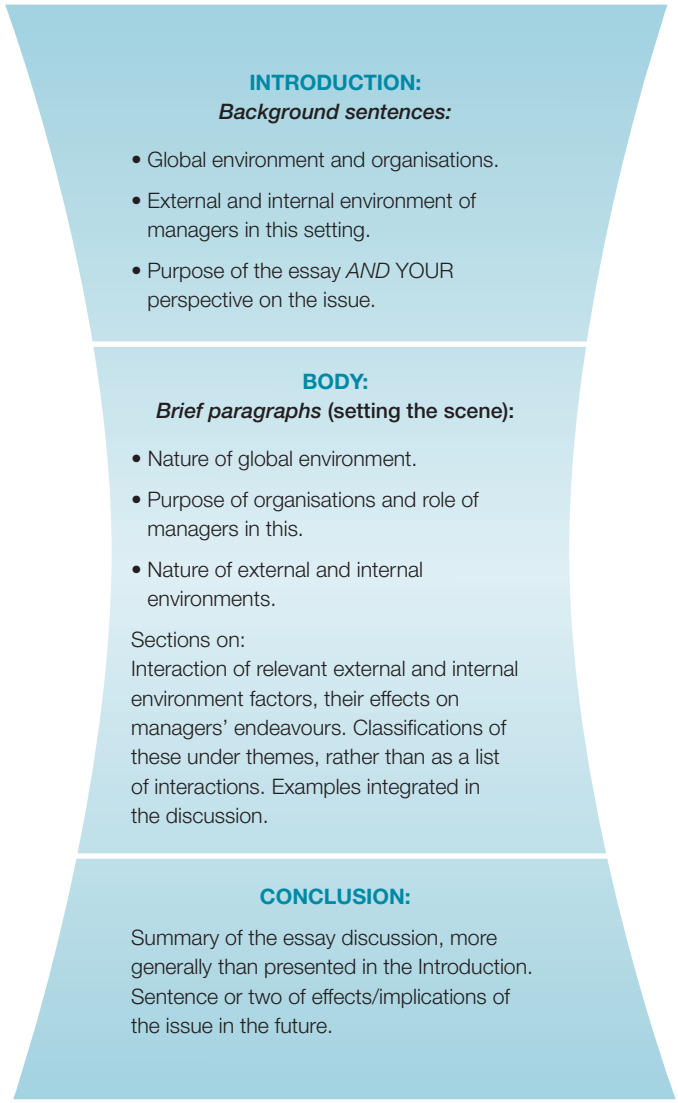
In the Introduction for the Econometrics and Business Statistics assignment above, the writer's perspective on the issue is:

> The infectious disease situation in Sub-Saharian Africa is much worse than that of the other two regions.

When you have refined your response, you can place it in the lower part of your Introduction, as seen in the Introduction for the Econometrics and Business Statistics report above.

## 4.4.2 Plan the response

Study the following plan for the Management essay. Note how the major part of the body of the essay discusses the *interaction of external and internal environmental factors* and the *manager's role*. There are only brief paragraphs on the general themes of the essay. Rather than merely describing the environments, the essay is responding to the complexity embedded in the task, which is the *interaction* of the internal and external environments in a manager's role.


INTRODUCTION:
Background sentences:
• Global environment and organisations.
• External and internal environment of managers in this setting.
• Purpose of the essay AND YOUR perspective on the issue.
BODY:
Brief paragraphs (setting the scene):
• Nature of global environment.
• Purpose of organisations and role of managers in this.
• Nature of external and internal environments.
Sections on:
Interaction of relevant external and internal environment factors, their effects on managers' endeavours. Classifications of these under themes, rather than as a list of interactions. Examples integrated in the discussion.
CONCLUSION:
Summary of the essay discussion, more generally than presented in the Introduction. Sentence or two of effects/implications of the issue in the future.

## 4.5 Supporting your perspective

Your perspective on the issue or topic should run through and shape your writing. A brief summary of your perspective in the introduction functions like a 'road map' for your reader. Study again the Introduction for the Econometrics and Business Statistics report that we have presented previously. Note how the student's perspective on the issue is summarised in the Introduction.

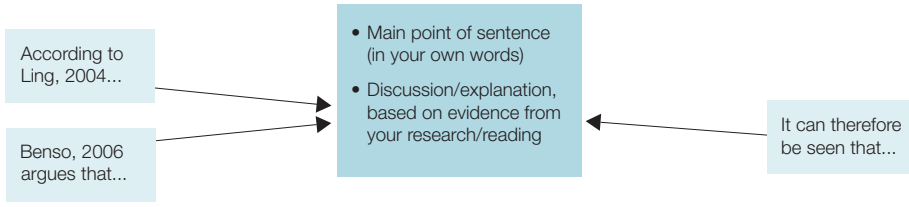
> The infectious disease situation in Sub-Saharian Africa is much worse than that of the other two regions.

The body of the report then continues to explain the writer's perspective in detail. Themes are developed for the major stages in the argument (or perspective), and points are established within these themes. If you are using headings, the themes form the headings. The points are the focus of your paragraphs. Evidence from the reading or data is used to support the points made.

### 4.5.1 Paragraph structure

Generally speaking, a paragraph is structured along the lines of a main point or topic sentence, followed by further discussion and explanation of the main point. The literature or data is brought in by the writer as evidence for the main point.

**Writing the essay: paragraph structure**


According to Ling, 2004...
Benso, 2006 argues that...
• Main point of sentence (in your own words)
• Discussion/explanation, based on evidence from your research/reading
It can therefore be seen that...

A less successful paragraph does not have a main point. It merely cobbles together evidence from the literature or data, but does not explain explicitly to the reader the overall significance of the evidence. There is no writer comment or perspective. A less successful use of references can be seen in the paragraph below.

**Example 1.**

Study the paragraphs below from an essay for Management. Note how the reference material supports, or is evidence for, the paragraph's main point. Note how the student's discussion runs through the paragraph.

Main point of paragraph/ topic sentence

Use of evidence from references to support discussion

One of the most essential parts of the internal environment of an organisation is the organisational culture. *Robbins, Bergman, Stagg & Coulter (2000, p. 92) claim that strong organisational cultures correlate positively with high business performance. However, Hellriegel, Slocum & Woodman (1991, p. 528) argue that the type of culture may be regarded more important than the strength of the culture in terms of organisational performance.* Numerous definitions of corporate culture have been formulated over time. *Typically, these definitions encompass several key components such as "corporate vision" and "shared values" (Sadri and Lees, 2000, p. 853) as well as "shared behaviours" and "cultural symbols" (Hellriegel, Slocum & Woodman, 2001, p. 513). Many organisations have a "dominant culture" (Sadri & Lees, 2001, p. 853) as well as many "subcultures" (p. 853) that are inconsistent with the dominant culture, but nevertheless ought to identify with the dominant corporate values.* It is important to clarify the relationship between national culture and organisational culture as well. *Wood (2001, p. 391) argues that "organisational culture frequently derives from national culture" (p. 391), but it is nevertheless unique in its own way.* From the above, it may be deduced that the national culture and the organisational culture strongly interact through employees and that understanding national cultures is essential in understanding specific organisational cultures.

Student writer's comments on the development of the paragraph's idea

In summary in the above paragraph:

- The writer's voice, or comments run(s) through the paragraph above.
- The writer has expressed a perspective at the beginning of the paragraph.
- The writer comments on the references and their contribution to the discussion. This is an indication of critical and analytical thinking.

#### 4.5.1.1 Referencing

References are used as evidence to support your point of view in a paragraph. If you take ideas or phrases and sentences from a text, you must reference the source. This principle applies even if you express the ideas in your own words. Failure to do so is plagiarism, and is a serious offence in the university. See Chapter 9 in this Guide for a fuller explanation of plagiarism. In the examples below, note how the author of the information cited is given prominence, followed by the writer's summary of the view in their own words.

Robbins, Bergman, Stagg and Coulter (2000, p. 92) claim that strong organisational cultures correlate positively with high business performance.

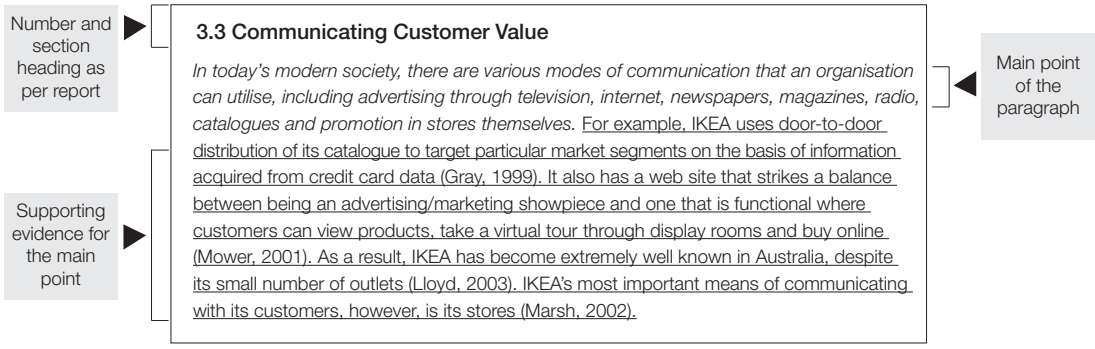
However, Hellriegel, Slocum and Woodman (1991, p. 528) argue that the type of culture may be regarded more important than the strength of the culture in terms of organisational performance.

There are a range of ways that writers can integrate references in their writing, and we explain some of these below.

### 4.5.2 Use of references

**Example 2.**

Study the paragraph below from a Marketing report.


Number and section heading as per report
3.3 Communicating Customer Value
In today's modern society, there are various modes of communication that an organisation can utilise, including advertising through television, internet, newspapers, magazines, radio, catalogues and promotion in stores themselves. For example, IKEA uses door-to-door distribution of its catalogue to target particular market segments on the basis of information acquired from credit card data (Gray, 1999). It also has a web site that strikes a balance between being an advertising/marketing showpiece and one that is functional where customers can view products, take a virtual tour through display rooms and buy online (Mower, 2001). As a result, IKEA has become extremely well known in Australia, despite its small number of outlets (Lloyd, 2003). IKEA's most important means of communicating with its customers, however, is its stores (Marsh, 2002).
Main point of the paragraph
Supporting evidence for the main point

#### 4.5.2.1 Referencing

Note the way the references are used in the following paragraph. Note how the writer has summarised in their own words the information from the references. The information itself is given prominence in this type of referencing, as indicated by the sources of the references being placed after the information.

For example, IKEA uses door-to-door distribution of its catalogue to target particular market segments on the basis of information acquired from credit card data (Gray 1999).

It also has a web site that strikes a balance between being an advertising/marketing showpiece and one that is functional where customers can view products, take a virtual tour through display rooms and buy online (Mower 2001).

As a result, IKEA has become extremely well known in Australia, despite its small number of outlets (Lloyd 2003).

IKEA's most important means of communicating with its customers, however, is its stores (Marsh 2002).

## 4.6 Presenting a consistent and logical response

It is important that your response to your assignment task 'hangs together well', and that your reader can follow the perspective you are presenting. As we have discussed previously, to assist this, it is important to integrate ideas and views from others to form your perspective and present it to your reader in the Introduction.

Over the assignment, your ideas need to be organised logically. For instance, your ideas can begin from a general perspective and move to that of a more specific view.

An important part of your writing, that will help your reader follow and understand your ideas, is the use of signaling or sign-posts, and connective words and phrases. Signaling explains briefly to the reader the direction and purpose of pieces of information. For instance, signaling or sign-posting may include statements such as:

- Before discussing …, it is necessary to define the terms.
- Following the explanation above of the nature of … and its effects on … , discussion can now focus on …

Connective words and phrases can help your reader to understand your thinking that underpins your writing. For instance, you may introduce a contrasting idea to one previously expressed with "however". "Therefore" or "thus" indicate results, or conclusions, while "furthermore" indicates a development of an idea expressed previously.

## 4.7 Expressing your ideas clearly

You must consider your reader in your academic writing. Your reader needs to judge the value of your knowledge and logic, so you need to express clearly your thought processes and ideas. To assist this, you can:

- order your ideas sequentially;
- express these ideas as clearly as possible.

If you have problems with English expression, Monash University Library provides services and resources to assist you. See http://www.lib.monash.edu.au/learning-skill

Clear expression of your ideas will help your reader understand your perspective. Do not think that your writing at university must use very complex sentence structure with very sophisticated vocabulary. Students who try to write in this way often find that their reader has no idea what they are trying to say.

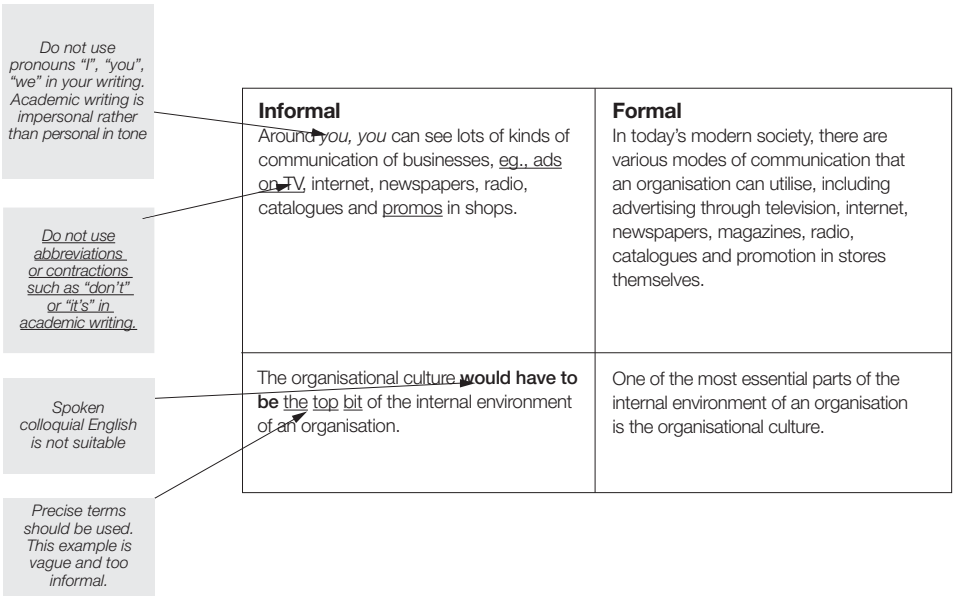
Try to have one main point for each paragraph. This point should be expressed clearly at the beginning of the paragraph. The rest of the paragraph should be providing evidence for the main point and explaining the idea more fully.

The following may help you to write clearly and in the appropriate academic style.

## 4.7.1 Formal academic language

The writing style (or register) in university studies is formal, rather than informal. While you may use colloquial or idiomatic expressions in your casual speech, this is not appropriate in assignment writing.

Study the examples below of informal and formal register.


Do not use pronouns "I", "you", "we" in your writing. Academic writing is impersonal rather than personal in tone
Do not use abbreviations or contractions such as "don't" or "it's" in academic writing.
Spoken colloquial English is not suitable
Precise terms should be used. This example is vague and too informal.

| **Informal** | **Formal** |
|---|---|
| Around *you, you* can see lots of kinds of communication of businesses, eg., ads on TV, internet, newspapers, radio, catalogues and promos in shops. | In today's modern society, there are various modes of communication that an organisation can utilise, including advertising through television, internet, newspapers, magazines, radio, catalogues and promotion in stores themselves. |
| The organisational culture **would have to be** the top bit of the internal environment of an organisation. | One of the most essential parts of the internal environment of an organisation is the organisational culture. |

## 4.7.2 Some other features of academic language

### 4.7.2.1 Objective rather than personal

The tone of your writing should be objective. This means that you rarely use first person pronouns, such as "I" and "we". For instance:

| **Personalised expression** | **Objective expression** |
|---|---|
| I found that there were several views in the literature on the topic. | Several views on the topic are postulated in the literature. |
| I think that … | It seems that …<br>Evidence suggests that …<br>The situation appears to be that … |

### 4.7.2.2 Verb tenses and references

You should try to be consistent in your use of verb tenses when referring to views from the literature. If you choose to use the past tense (for example, *Smith (1998) stated that* …), the past tense should be continued throughout the assignment. The same applies if you choose to use the present tense (for example, *Ling (2004) explores the nature of …*)

Past tense should be used in explaining facets such as the purpose of a study, or the findings: *This study has investigated …* (present perfect tense), *It was found that …*

### 4.7.2.3 Passive and active sentence constructions

While you should use a combination of active and passive sentence structures in your writing, do not overuse the passive construction. It can lead to blandness in your writing. Note the difference between active and passive sentence structures below:

| **Passive sentence construction** | **Active sentence construction** |
|---|---|
| The financial process was controlled by the accountant. | The accountant took control of the financial process. |

### 4.7.2.4 Proof reading and English grammar

It is important to understand that writing is a process. Once you have completed a rough draft, you need to check that your ideas are clearly expressed, and that your writing 'makes sense'. You can check this by having someone read over your piece of work pointing out areas and sentences where your ideas are unclear. You can also read it aloud onto a tape, when you are listening to it you can often pick up mistakes, such as incomplete sentences. Ensure you correct these in your final draft, that your Word dictionary is set to English (Australia), and that you *spell check* the final document!

In particular, this means making sure that:

- Any sentences where meaning is unclear are clarified;
- Any repetition or incorrect spelling is eliminated;
- Any poor or sloppy expression or syntax is improved.

### 4.7.2.5 Referencing in your writing

In your note-taking, make sure that you keep note of the bibliographic details of the source for inclusion in your assignment. These also need to be included in your reference list, see Chapter 10 for more details.

Direct quotes may be used in your writing, but should be limited in frequency. Your examiners want to read your interpretation of, and comment on, a literature view.

## 4.8 Checklist for academic writing skills

- Respond to the question posed in the assignment task. Analyse your task so you respond to it, rather than what you would like the task to be.
- Read and integrate the views on the topic so as to develop your own response or perspective on the task. This forms the focus of your writing.
- Provide guidance for your examiner in your writing. This can be done with headings if suitable, simple statements of direction and purpose, and linking and signaling words and phrases.
- Make sure the main points of your paragraphs are clear. Use data or evidence from the literature to discuss, support and as evidence for these.
- Limit a sentence to a single statement of fact, or one idea. This will produce simple or compound sentences rather than complex ones, and so avoid problems of handling support clauses.
- Ensure that your sentences are properly linked.
- Make sure that the identity of the noun to which a pronoun relates is clear.
- Remember that developing good written communication skills is important for your future after graduation.
- Be aware that different settings have somewhat different expectations in terms of what is effective and competent written communication. It is important that you learn to identify and respond to the written communication expectations of different settings.
- The different disciplines in Business and Economics have different preferences for forms of written communication (i.e. essay, report, case study response) and different ways of putting ideas together, and you need to be alert to and respond to these.
- Your experience in identifying the expectations and writing effectively across the Business and Economics disciplines prepares you to write effectively in future situations, global and local, in which you may find yourself after graduation.

# Chapter 5
# Writing essays

In your faculty studies, you will be required to write essays in many of your units of study. In general, we have covered the points relevant to producing successful essays in Chapter 4 on writing in your university studies. In the following section, we emphasise again the significant points for essay writing.

## 5.1 Analyse the task

The most important point is that you *analyse* your task, so that you understand clearly what you are required to do. You need to investigate the themes of the task. However, this activity in itself is insufficient, and would result in writing that is descriptive only. You must address the relationship and subtleties of the themes, as laid out in the task. An important factor in doing so is paying attention to the words in assignment tasks that direct you to the required cognitive process, or activity. These include processes like "discuss", "compare and contrast", "explain", and so on. We have previously analysed a task in Chapter 4 which demonstrates this process.

When you are clear about what the task requires, you then need to research and find relevant information from the literature. You will use your critical thinking skills when you decide which publications, and which sections of these, are relevant to your task. Take notes on the relevant sections, remembering to keep the bibliographic details of the publications, and the page numbers if you take direct quotes.

## 5.2 Synthesise your information

When you have gathered and taken notes on all the information you need, the next step is to synthesise it and, in so doing, arrive at *your* response to the task. See Chapter 4 for an illustration of this.

## 5.3 Plan the essay

The next step is to plan your essay, so that you are presenting your response and explaining it clearly, logically and convincingly in the essay. Developing a succinct, initial response to the task as we have explained in point 5.2 is useful. This forms a focus for your essay, and can be included in the last part of the introduction. In this way, the reader is provided with direction as to your over-riding response to the task.

As essay is structured along the lines we have discussed in Chapter 4. It begins with an introduction, which is generally 10% of the overall size of the essay and states for the reader what will be done in the essay.

The body of the essay explains logically and in detail, and with properly-referenced evidence from the literature, your response. The body is made up of sections, which are divided into points. Each paragraph should contain a main point (usually the first sentence of the paragraph) and the remainder of the paragraph explains this point, with the use of evidence from the literature.

The conclusion to the essay is again about 10% of the overall size of the essay, and summarises in general form the response presented throughout the essay. The final sentence or two can open up the discussion by presenting implications, or a comment on the future of the issue.

## 5.4 Reference the sources of information

A vital point is that referencing must be completed appropriately. If information is used from a source, whether as a direct quote, or as a paraphrase or a summary, the source must be referenced. It is also important that the essay is more than merely a summary of information from the literature, even if it is referenced appropriately. An essay must represent the "writer's voice". This occurs through the writer developing their own response to the task, on the basis of the evidence in the literature or the data, and the evidence used to support the writer's clearly expressed view.

In essays for some units such as some Management and Economics, it is suitable to use headings, in a similar way to the headings in a report. It is always necessary to ask your lecturer or tutor if headings can be used. If so, the headings must relate to and express succinctly the nature of the information that follows. If headings cannot be used, the links throughout the essay will need to be expressed in sentences.

In all, an essay needs to respond directly to the task, have a clear focus through the writer developing their own response to the task, explain the response in a logical and organised way, and convince the reader of its validity through the use of references and data as evidence. An essay must demonstrate a writer's voice, and be appropriately referenced. It should be coherent, cohesive and flow logically.

**Checklist for essay writing:**

- Make sure that you analyse your task and understand the underlying themes and their interaction.
- Direct your efforts to developing your own task response. It must respond to the complexity embedded in the task, rather than merely describing the themes.
- Make sure you provide your reader with a succinct overview of your response in the introduction.
- Link sections of the body and paragraphs within these, so your reader understands what you are doing, and why.
- Use appropriate headings in the essay, if appropriate.
- Support points that you make with evidence from your reading, and acknowledge it appropriately.
- Form your conclusion on the basis of your response to the task and the discussion in the body of your essay.

# Chapter 6
# Writing a literature review

Many assignment tasks require you to review the literature on a particular topic or issue in the process of responding to the major task. For instance, in an essay, report, project or thesis, you review the literature to develop your perspective on a topic or issue. In explaining your perspective, you need to support it with evidence from the literature.

Some assignments, however, may purely ask you to present a literature review on a particular topic. This type of assignment is the focus of this chapter.

The academic skills that you will develop and use in completing a literature review are important. They prepare you for life after graduation where you will need to cope with, and negotiate, increasingly large amounts of information as the world becomes increasingly globalised and information-rich. For instance, after accessing suitable information for your topic, you will develop and exercise skills in judging its suitability and validity. This ability, to critically analyse information and research, is essential to the logical and coherent organisation of material in your academic work. Reviewing literature demands the critical evaluation of its contribution to a given topic or field including identification and articulation of its shortcomings, if relevant.

A literature review is based on the understanding that knowledge is not fixed and static. Rather, it evolves as researchers investigate and report on their findings in publications, whether in a book, a chapter in an edited book or a refereed journal article. Material published in these types of publications is seen as authoritative and therefore valid. This particularly applies to refereed journal articles, where the articles have undergone rigorous scrutiny from experts in the field before being accepted for publication.

You need to read and understand the published views in the field of your topic so that you are aware of the state of knowledge; that is, the way knowledge in the field of the topic has developed, and the controversies surrounding it.

The purpose of a literature review may then be summarised as:

- Explaining how knowledge has evolved around an issue or topic;
- Showing how the problem, issue or topic under investigation relates to previous research;
- Explaining the controversies and problems surrounding an issue or topic.

## 6.1 The nature of a literature review

In a summarised form, a literature review involves:

- Clear statement of the issue/topic, and its dimensions. You need to find published material that discusses the major aspects of the topic;
- Clear, explicit and logical organisation of the range of views in the literature;
- Critical and comparative evaluation of the views in the literature.

**Be aware:**

- A mere summary of the literature views, presented one after another in an unconnected way, is **NOT** suitable.

## 6.2 Procedure for completing a literature review

When completing a literature review the following steps can be followed:

1. ***Analyse*** the topic to identify its dimensions.
2. Locate suitable published material on the topic.
3. ***Read, understand and summarise*** the views presented in the published material.
4. Consider the published views in terms of a matrix, or 'jigsaw puzzle' surrounding the topic, identifying their similarities and differences.
5. Juxtapose the views against each other, ***critiquing***, or identifying their strengths and weaknesses, and contribution to knowledge on the topic.
6. Decide on a way of ***organising*** or ***classifying*** the range of views you have collected.
7. Organise the published views under the themes or headings you have established in the previous step.

You may organise, or classify, the published views along the following lines:

- from general to specific;
- from earliest to most recent;
- on the basis of how the ideas have emerged;
- on the basis of how the views conflict with other views;
- how the views relate to others;
- the usefulness of the views.

## 6.3 Writing the literature review

1. Introduce the topic, its definitions and the dimensions that will be investigated in the review.
2. Explain to the reader the theme underpinning the presentation of the literature reviews (for example, the evolution of knowledge over time, the existing fields of knowledge and their understandings on the topic).
3. Present the literature views according to the classification system that you have previously outlined for the reader. In so doing, as well as summarising the views, it is most important to explain to the reader your evaluation of their strengths or weaknesses, how they conflict or agree with other views, and so on.
4. Consider ways of referencing information. You may wish to use:
   - The information prominent method, for example:
     The major form of management used in the 1950s was the … approach (Ling, 1998).
   - The author prominent method, for example:
     Nguyen (2002) has pointed out the management in the 1950s was mainly concerned with …
5. Consider the range of verbs that can be used in the author's prominent approach, and the subtle comment that these make about the nature of the author's contribution. Such verbs include: argue; state; put forward; posit; postulate; assert; suggest; introduce; contribute; further explain.
6. Consider the tense of the verb that you use to introduce the published view and its subtle comment on the current validity of the view. For example, "argued" implies that the view is no longer as valid as previously; "states" suggests that the view is strong and still valid, even if it was published some time ago; "suggests" points to a sense of tentativeness about the validity or contribution of the view.
7. At the end of the review, identify and state any issues or problems that have arisen from the review, or were not investigated in the published material.

## 6.4 Checklist for a literature review

- Make sure you analyse the topic, identify its dimensions or sub-themes, and define these in the introduction.
- As well as summarising the views presented in the pieces of literature, make sure that you critique these. This means juxtaposing them against the others, evaluating their similarities, differences, strengths and weaknesses, contribution to the topic, and so on. Make sure that you express such critical comments in the literature review.
- Make sure that you establish a system of organising the range of views, and make this clear to the reader.
- Most importantly, do not merely present the different views on the topic as a list, without any classificatory system or critical, evaluative comments.

# Chapter 7
# Report writing

Consistent with Chapters 4 and 5 on assignment preparation, this chapter focuses on the report writing process and report layout and presentation. Although the information contained in this chapter is generally accepted business practice, you are advised to consult with your tutors and/or Unit Outline regarding any specific expectations they have for this work.

Eunson (2005) argues that one of the major complaints levelled at report writing is that they often read like essays. There are a number of important distinctions between these two types of documents. Generally, reports aid decision making and problem solving and are, therefore, more problem and action oriented. In terms of presentation, reports include separate sections (on separate pages) such as the table of contents, executive summary and recommendations, which are not usually included in essays. They also use numbered headings and sub-headings for major sections of the body.

## 7.1 The process

### 7.1.1 Identify the purpose of the report

Unless you are certain about the purpose of your report, it is unlikely that your conclusions and/or recommendations will be relevant. Therefore, it is important to clearly identify the purpose of the report. This can be achieved by writing a one-sentence statement about the problem, issue or question being posed. For example, the report may be required to assist in decision-making, to solve a problem, or perhaps to persuade the reader to adopt an idea or a particular approach. In any event, this activity requires reflective and analytical thinking.

Alternatively, it may be useful to write a concise title which clearly indicates the content and scope of the report. If you take this approach, however, you should be careful that the title is impartial and does not reflect a bias toward a preferred outcome.

### 7.1.2 Identify the readers and their needs

Generally speaking, the reader's knowledge of the subject will influence the type of background information and technical language you use in your report. However, since your readers are most likely to be your tutors and an 'imaginary reader', the principle is the same as that which applies to essay writing.

This approach emphasises the importance of creating meaning for the reader by avoiding unnecessary explanations and focusing on clearly defined issues that help the reader understand the nature and direction of the report.

### 7.1.3 Research the topic

In order to produce a high quality report, it is necessary to use relevant and current information from a variety of sources. Individuals who may have first-hand knowledge of the subject are a valuable source of information. However, secondary data contained on the net, texts and journal articles will form the bulk of the information for writing your report. It is also worthwhile supplementing this with information contained in newspaper articles, theses, conference papers, speeches, annual reports, brochures, and so on. Besides being an efficient means of collecting data, reading a variety of materials may provide useful insights into the nature of the problem, acquaint you with terminology, theory or methods you had not previously considered, refer you to other sources of information and generally assist you in formulating a tentative outline.

Whilst depth and breadth of reading are highly recommended, for practical purposes you should also be selective in what you read. Ignore outdated and irrelevant materials and always keep in mind the purpose of your report.

It is also important to record your sources on some type of database such as *Endnote. Cite the author, date, title, publisher, city of publication and page numbers. The database will assist you to prepare an accurate and complete reference list. See Chapter 10 for more details.

*Monash students can download Endnote software from the Web and Monash libraries offer Endnote classes throughout the year, go to the Monash library website http://www.lib.monash.edu.au/ for more details. Classes can be booked on-line through your mymonash portal.

### 7.1.4 Outline the report

Having reviewed, synthesised and interpreted the information, the next step is to prepare the body of your report. (Leave the introduction and conclusion until later). This is done by establishing a framework, or structure, around which you will write. Start off by experimenting with four or five major headings as signposts for your thinking. It is within these major sections that you will present the facts, explanations and reasoning that will lead to your conclusions and recommendations. This means that you place related issues into groups according to common characteristics. Again, this is based on the purpose of your report.

Each section heading should clearly indicate its content, should have reader interest and be as brief as possible. You then need to arrange these groups or headings into a logical sequence. The outlining process often requires a number of revisions but, once you are satisfied with it, you can work on developing the sub-sections under each heading.

### 7.1.5 Write the draft

When you have outlined the body of the report, that is, arranged the major section headings and sub-headings, the next step is to prepare the first draft. Do not worry overly about spelling and punctuation at this stage. Instead, focus on the ideas you are presenting, the evidence to support them, and their logical flow.

Try to form your own line of argument based on your research data. For every section commence by writing a sentence which encapsulates your main idea or ideas, then elaborate with supporting evidence. This means that you are expressing the ideas in your own words and explaining to the reader how other writers' ideas have had an influence on your argument, or how your argument has incorporated these ideas, and the reasons for this. If you find a quotation in your reading that makes a strong contribution to your argument, quote it, and ensure that you reference the source of the quote. However, avoid over-quoting as the reader will soon lose sense of the argument.

Once this has been done, ensure that the information flows logically and that you have guided the reader's understanding by adding linking statements such as 'After considering..., it follows that ... is important'. In other words, you need to explain your line of thinking for the reader, highlighting the relevance and importance of the sections which lead to the conclusion and/or recommendations.

An important consideration in this drafting stage is impartiality. As a researcher and writer you need to express your ideas in an objective manner. Consequently, it is general practice to write the report in third person, past tense. For example, instead of 'We did this study...' write 'The purpose of this study was to...'. Also remember to write clearly and concisely without contractions such as 'don't' or 'shouldn't', and avoid using slang.

### 7.1.6 Edit the draft

Once you have completed a rough draft you need to check that your ideas are clearly expressed and that your writing makes sense. If possible, you should leave the report for at least one day before editing. Edit it yourself or have someone else proofread the report, checking for inconsistency of argument, poor grammar, spelling, typographical errors. Keep in mind that you may have to prepare several drafts of your report, reading through, correcting and refining your ideas and expression with each one.

### 7.1.7 The finished product

Making your report as comprehensive and professional as possible plays an important role in communicating your ideas to your reader.

There are various ways of enhancing the visual appeal of your report. Firstly, choose a typeface that is easy to read. Most word processing software offers a variety of font choices. You can also enlarge the font for a title page or reduce it for notations. Use bullet points, italics or boldface for emphasis, but use them consistently throughout the report.

Format the report so that it is visually pleasing. Leave plenty of room in the side margins (particularly the left), and at the top and bottom of each page. Include illustrations, tables or graphs, but make certain that they have been adequately explained in the body of the report. Do not incorporate them unless they are relevant to the point you are making.

## 7.2 Report presentation and layout

In this section a number of guidelines regarding report presentation and layout are presented. These guidelines are not prescriptive and some academic staff may have their own preferences, so it is important that you consult the subject outline and/or the tutor before proceeding.

### 7.2.1 Structure of a report

Although the structure of a report can vary, business and academic reports usually (but not always) contain the following parts:

- Transmittal document (this is a separate document attached to the front of the report. Do not include it unless specifically requested to do so. Please check your Unit Outline.)
- Title page
- Table of contents
- List of figures
- List of tables or illustrations
- Executive summary
- Introduction
- Body of the report (this section is further divided into as many sections as necessary)
- Conclusions
- Recommendations
- Appendices
- Bibliography/Reference list

**Preliminaries**

The preliminary sections of a report include the transmittal document, title page, table of contents, lists of figures, tables and illustrations and executive summary. The preliminary pages are numbered with small Roman numerals.

*Transmittal document*

A report often includes a covering letter, memo or email to the person who requested it. Essentially, the writer is saying, “Please find attached the report you requested” or “Please find attached the report you requested on…” “In this report you will find...”. He or she may also provide a brief summary of the report or alternatively, the writer may mention items of special interest and acknowledge those who may have contributed to the report. This is optional and you are only required to submit this on request.

*Title page*
Unless otherwise stated the title page of your report should include the following details:

- title of the report
- your name and student number
- due date for the assignment
- name of the tutor or lecturer for whom the report was written
- the name of the unit (including the unit code)

*Table of contents*
This page is used to outline the sections and sub-sections of the report. It reveals the organisation of the report showing the headings and sub-headings and their corresponding page numbers.

*List of figures, tables, illustrations*
When there are six or more figures, tables and illustrations, they are listed on a separate page with their corresponding page numbers in the text. If only a few exist, then they are included in the table of contents' page.

*Executive summary/Summary and recommendations*
Reports usually include a summary section which is called an 'executive summary'. It was originally designed for busy executives who did not have time to read the entire report. It contains no quotations and is no more than one page in length. The executive summary is placed at the beginning of the report, after the table of contents, but before the introduction. It is given a Roman numeral rather than an Arabic page number.

The executive summary should include the following:

- the purpose of the report
- background to the report (e.g. company information)
- sources of information
- main findings
- conclusions and recommendations

**Introduction**

The introduction of a report usually covers some or all of the following points:

- purpose or objective of writing the report
- background information (for example a brief history of the organisation, context of topic or problem)
- scope, that is, the size or extent of study, amount of data collected, time frames, focus of data collection or discussion (for example, a department or whole organisation)
- methodology, that is, the kind of data used (for example, who was interviewed, what type of material was referred to). In certain reports, the methodology may be set out in a separate section prior to the body of the report
- assumptions and limitations, (for example, given the above material, any assumptions that were made and any limitations placed on the material included in the report)
- plan, (for example, the structure adopted for the report). This briefly overviews the argument, framework or logical structure that the reader should expect to read in the rest of the report.

**Results/findings/discussion**

This is a significant part of the body of your report. This section should contain the basic facts supported by evidence by way of examples, quotations, charts, diagrams etc. The organisation of the main body of the report will vary considerably according to factors such as the type of problem posed, nature of the topic and the length of the report. However, as a general rule, the findings are divided into logical sections and sub-sections with appropriate headings and sub-headings. These should be numbered using the decimal system.

### Conclusion

Round off your work with a concluding section. These are logical deductions drawn from the findings in the previous section. Sum up the main points and refer to any underlying theme. If any questions or issues remain unresolved, mention them in the conclusion.

### Recommendations

The recommendations comprise the suggested course of action to be taken to solve a particular problem. They are written as action statements without justification. They are expressed in clear, specific language. They should be expressed in order of importance.

### Supplements

*Appendices*

Include in an appendix any supporting evidence, such as tables, which is not possible to incorporate in the main body of the report. If original questionnaires or tests have been used they may be included in the appendices.

*Reference list*

The reference list should give information about all sources consulted in writing the report. It is customary to arrange the reference list in alphabetical order according to author (see Chapter 10). Full publication details must be included.

## 7.3 Report writing checklist

*Does the title page have:*

- the title of the assignment
- the author's name
- the recipient
- the name of the course
- the name of the department/faculty
- the date of submission
- the approximate length of the paper?

*Does the table of contents have:*

- a list of tables
- a list of figures
- headings matched with Arabic page numbers
- references
- a Roman numeral page number
- a heading?

*Does the list of tables have:*

- a heading
- table numbers, titles matched with page numbers
- a Roman numeral page number?

*Does the list of figures have:*

- a heading
- figure numbers, titles matched with page numbers
- a Roman numeral page number?

*Does the executive summary have:*

- a separate page
- a heading
- a summary of all the main points in the report
- a Roman numeral page number?

**The Text**

*Does the structure of the report include:*

- an introductory section
- developing sections
- a concluding section
- a reference list?

*Does the introduction:*

- define the topic and the key terms
- delineate the scope and focus of the topic
- indicate the writing task
- present a plan of the argument followed in the essay
- show the writer's theoretical stance/ approach?

*Does the body of the report:*

- comply with the aim
- expand the plan of the report given in the introduction
- keep to the topic
- follow the theoretical approach proposed in the introduction
- back up claims with evidence?

*Does the concluding section:*

- restate the main ideas
- give the writer's personal opinion on the matter
- state any implications?

**Layout**

*Do headings and subheadings:*

- follow a consistent and accepted style?

*Are quotations:*

- enclosed in quotation marks incorporated into the body of the paragraph
- less than three lines long
- sourced with the author's surname, date of publication and page number in brackets?

*Are quotations:*

- relevant
- copied verbatim
- sourced accurately?

*Have all in-text paraphrases and citations been sourced by:*

- author's name
- date of publication
- optional page numbers?

*Are tables incorporated with:*

- an in-text cross-reference
- a frame
- a number that is consecutive
- a heading?

*Are figures incorporated with:*

- an in-text cross-reference
- a frame
- a number that is consecutive
- a heading?

*Are the references:*

- on a separate page
- under the appropriate heading according to an acceptable system of citation, for example the author-date system outlined in Chapter 10
- listed alphabetically by surnames?

# Chapter 8
# Case study method

The use of case studies is a widely accepted means of bringing theoretical concepts and practical situations together. It is not possible to take a class into an organisation and observe the subject matter of management or organisational behaviour in real life, hence a written case study outlining a real, or realistic, situation is the best available alternative.

When reading and studying a case study, it is possible to take two different approaches. The first of these is the 'analytical' approach where a case structure is examined to try to understand what has happened, and why. In this approach, you do not identify problems or attempt to develop solutions. The second approach is the problem-oriented method. In this approach a case is analysed to identify the major problems that exist, the causes of and possible solutions to the problems, and finally, a recommendation as to the best solution to implement.

This chapter describes the problem solving case study method. As with many tasks in business, there is no 'one best way' to analyse or write up a case report. Everyone develops their own methods of sorting and sifting through the information and presenting their findings. However, in this chapter you will find a format which may be useful when presenting your case reports. This format is outlined briefly below.

## 8.1 Some general issues

In a case study, it is crucial that you integrate relevant theory from the course and evidence from the case. Failure to attempt to integrate theory will lead to severe mark reduction or failure. Referencing of all non-original material is essential. You will lose marks for poor referencing.

Check your completed work for internal consistency. For example, make sure that you attempt to solve the key issues you have identified. Do not say 'X' is the major problem, and then recommend a solution to 'Y'. Try not to be overly descriptive. Remember that you are trying to identify, analyse and solve the problems of the case using the relevant theories from the course, not just repeating what the text book, or case information, has stated.

## 8.2 Problem solving case format

1. **Title page**

2. **Table of contents**

3. **Executive summary**

   This section should comprise a brief overview of the case, giving a brief background and noting any important assumptions made. (You will not have all the information you would like – so you may need to make some assumptions). As well as this, you should give a synopsis of your case report, noting very briefly the major problems identified and the recommended solutions.

4. **Problem identification and analysis**

   In this section, you should identify all the major problems in the case. Try to identify the underlying causes of problems, not just the symptoms. Seek advice from your tutor on the layout of this information. You should link each problem identified to relevant theory and also to actual evidence from the case. Remember, you ***must*** integrate theory and reference all non-original work.

5. **Statement of major problems**

   In most case studies, you will identify a number of problems. Most likely, there will be too many to actually 'solve' in the number of words allowed. Hence, it is crucial to state very clearly which are the major two or three problems, or key issues, that must be solved first. Therefore, this section is just a short concise statement of what problems you are going to solve in the remainder of the case. Half a page is adequate. Having once identified the key problems you can continually check back to ensure that you are actually attempting to solve them, and not some other minor problems you identified. This section is crucial to a good case report.

6. **Generation and evaluation of alternative solutions**

   While most problems will have a very large number of possible solutions, it is your task to identify and evaluate a number of the more appropriate (at least 2–3 for each major problem identified).

   Each alternative solution should be briefly outlined and then *evaluated in terms of its advantages and disadvantages* (strong and weak points). ***Note: You must evaluate alternatives.*** It is not necessary to make a statement in this section as to which alternative is considered best – this occurs in the next section. Do not integrate theory in this section and do not recommend theory. Practical solutions to the problems are required.

7. **Recommendations**

   This section should state which of the alternative solutions (either singularly or in combination) identified in Section 6 are recommended for implementation. You should briefly justify your choice, explaining how it will solve the major problems identified in Section 6. Integration of relevant theory is essential here.

8. **Implementation**

   In this section, you should specifically explain how you will implement the recommended solutions. Theory cannot be implemented; you must translate it into actions. This includes explaining *what* should be done, *by whom*, *when*, *in what sequence*, what will it *cost* (rough estimates only), and other such issues. *Remember*, if a recommended solution cannot be realistically implemented, then it is no solution at all.

9. **Appendices** (if any)

10. **Reference list**

    This will contain an alphabetical list of all the references you have cited in the body of the report. Do not include details of any sources you have not cited. Ensure the style used is correct and consistent.

**Checklist for a case study**

1. **Executive summary**
   - Summary of report and recommendations.
   - Give a brief background to the company and outline its problems, your recommendations and any assumptions noted.
2. **Problem identification and analysis**
   - Identification and analysis of management problems including causes.
   - Integration of theory and case evidence.
3. **Statement of 'key' problems/issues**
   - Clear, concise statement of major problem/s that the remainder of the case is going to solve.
4. **Generation and evaluation of a range of alternative solutions**
   - These potential solutions should be linked to the key problems.
   - Each alternative should be evaluated.
   - Range/Relevant/Creative/Apply Concepts.
5. **Decisions/recommendations**
   - Clear statement of which of the alternative/s suggested (in 4) is/are recommended, and why.
   - Should be justified using theory and/or course concepts. This solution should solve key problem/s noted.
6. **Implementation**
   - Action steps involved in actually introducing the recommended solutions. Who/When/How/Cost

# Chapter 9

## Academic integrity and honesty: avoiding plagiarism in written work

Researching and reading ideas and viewpoints published in articles and books by other authors is integral to university and faculty studies. As we have explained in Chapter 4, you form your own response to your assignment task by reading and thinking about the research, ideas and findings from the experts in the field published in articles and books.

The ideas and viewpoints put forward by these authors are also the evidence and support that you require in your written response. Without the evidence and support from the 'experts', your response would not be acceptable academically.

It thus follows logically that you need to acknowledge and reference the supporting ideas and viewpoints in your writing. Failure to acknowledge and reference the source of others' ideas and viewpoints is plagiarism, and this is treated seriously in academic studies. Avoiding plagiarism is an integral part of the respect for learning and research that the university fosters and depends upon for academic work to be worthwhile. As a student, you have an important role in maintaining the highest possible standards of academic honesty by avoiding plagiarism in all its forms. This is a learning process requiring work and diligence throughout your career as a student.

This chapter, read in conjunction, particularly, with Chapter 10 and Chapter 4 will provide a clear guide to ensuring you develop and maintain your academic honesty and integrity. In Chapter 10 we have provided guidance on referencing techniques. Following the explanation of plagiarism in this chapter, we explain how to summarise and paraphrase (put into your own words) the ideas and viewpoints that you read. Along with acknowledgement and correct referencing, this will help you avoid plagiarism in your written work by being able to clearly identify the different forms of plagiarism; know what is required of you in your work, particularly in relation to the use of other people's work; and effectively summarise, paraphrase and incorporate others' work, whilst making your own contribution to an existing field using correct and accurate referencing techniques.

Understanding and correctly practising these processes in your work will not happen in an instant. Many students will not have been introduced to these ideas and concepts before. Your job is to work to understand and practise the processes outlined in this chapter and guide, and seek help from tutors, learning support services, unit coordinators and other students if you are unclear, or have any questions about anything outlined.

## 9.1 What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism occurs when writers claim ownership of written words or ideas which are not their own. It is 'stealing' the intellectual property of other writers and is not allowed in the university.

If you copy texts without acknowledging the source of information, disciplinary action may result and you could be suspended or excluded from the University.

There are two ways of acknowledging a source:

- if you are quoting the exact words (a string of perhaps five or more words) of another writer, then these words should be identified and the source acknowledged and referenced
- if you are using the ideas or views (but not the exact words) of another writer, these must also be acknowledged and referenced – typically this reference will appear following the expression of the idea or viewpoint of another writer.

It is important to point out that simply copying slabs of information or sentences from texts, even if the source of the information is referenced, is not a proper way of writing essays or reports. Although it is not plagiarism, it is academically unacceptable.

Examples of plagiarism include:

- copying another person's work without correct referencing. This includes copying from a book, a journal article, a web site or another student's assignment/s;

- copying from notes distributed by the tutor or from slideshows without correct referencing;
- paraphrasing another person's work with minor changes, but keeping the meaning, flow of argument or ideas the same as the original without correct referencing;
- cutting and pasting another person's work into a new document and passing it off as your own;
- submitting an assignment which has already been submitted for assessment in another unit;
- presenting an assignment as independent work when it has been produced in collusion with other students (where this was not specified as a group project).

Plagiarism also relates to students copying or basing their written work on that of other students. Of course, students often work together in order to clarify understandings and test out their ideas before they establish their individual responses to topics; this is acceptable practice. If you are not clear about how collaborative work should be presented, talk to your lecturer or tutor. However, unless indicated otherwise in the unit outline, the piece of work submitted for assessment ***must*** be your own response and ***must*** be your own work.

## 9.2 Monash University Statute 4.1 and policy regarding plagiarism

University Statute 4.1 – Discipline and the policy regarding plagiarism govern the penalties and procedures when a piece of work is identified as suspected plagiarism or cheating.

Statute 4.1 – Discipline can be found at:
http://www.monash.edu.au/pubs/calendar/statutes/Statute04.html

Plagiarism Policy can be found at:
http://www.policy.monash.edu/policy-bank/academic/education/conduct/plagiarism-policy.html

**Definitions as set out by University Policy**

Plagiarism – means "to take and use another person's ideas and or manner of expressing them and to pass them off as one's own by failing to give appropriate acknowledgement."

Cheating – means "seeking to obtain an unfair advantage in an examination or in other written or practical work required to be submitted or completed by a student for assessment."

Collusion – means the "unauthorised collaboration on assessable work with another person or persons" which constitutes cheating.

Re-submission of work – where "work submitted for assessment, which has previously been submitted in another unit without disclosure of the fact", is considered as cheating.

"Plagiarism occurs when students fail to acknowledge that the ideas of others are being used." Specifically it occurs when:

- other people's work and/or ideas are paraphrased and presented without a reference;
- other students' work is copied or partly copied;
- other people's designs, codes or images are presented as the student's own work;
- phrases and passages are used verbatim without quotation marks and/or without a reference to the author or a web page;
- lecture notes are reproduced without due acknowledgment.

If the plagiarism is:

- done intentionally, that is, the student knew that he/she should have cited the source and deliberately failed to do so, the student has cheated;
- not intentional, the only offence the student has committed is the academic misdemeanour of failing to reference a source correctly. The matter should, therefore, be treated in the normal manner i.e. as a case of poor referencing and poor academic work, and be marked accordingly and an academic penalty may be applied.

## 9.2.1 What happens when plagiarism is suspected?

A work of assessment that is suspected of plagiarism will be reported to the chief examiner for the unit. The chief examiner must decide whether the plagiarism amounts to cheating. A student found to have plagiarised will be provided with the opportunity to respond.

If the chief examiner decides there is no finding of cheating, the assessment will be marked appropriately. In some cases the chief examiner may require the student to attend a meeting with the chief examiner to discuss the issue of plagiarism, and a warning letter may be issued to the student.

If the chief examiner determines there is evidence to support the finding of cheating, the student will be given an opportunity to respond to the allegation and discuss the matter with the chief examiner before a decision is made.

Where the chief examiner decides that cheating has occurred, the chief examiner must either

(a) take disciplinary action; or

(b) report the matter to the Faculty Manager who will then implement the appropriate disciplinary action under Statute 4.1.

The chief examiner can also make a request to check the Plagiarism register to see if a student has received any prior warnings or an outcome that has resulted from disciplinary action for plagiarism.

If the chief examiner decides to take action, he/she must:

- disallow the work concerned by prohibiting assessment (that piece of assessment is not to be marked and must receive zero marks); and
- inform the student in writing that the marks have been disallowed and that he/she has the right to appeal the disallowance; and
- inform the Associate Dean (Education) and the Faculty Secretariat of the disallowance.

The record of the disciplinary action will be recorded on the Plagiarism register.

A record of an accusation on the Plagiarism register will be retained while the student is enrolled or intermitted in any course and academic staff will have access to this information when considering any subsequent allegations of plagiarism.

## 9.2.2 Students' responsibility

Students are required to submit an *Assessment Cover Sheet* for every piece of assessment, which should contain:

- the approved definition of plagiarism;
- a statement on collusion;
- the approved Privacy Statement;
- a certification by the student:
  a. that plagiarism or collusion has not occurred;
  b. whether the assignment is original or has been previously submitted as part of another unit/subject/course;
  c. that proper care of safeguarding their work and all reasonable effort to ensure it could not be copied was taken;
  d. that the assessor of the assignment may for the purposes of assessment, reproduce the assignment and:
     1. provide to another member of faculty; and/or
     2. submit it to a plagiarism service; and/or
     3. submit it to a plagiarism service (which may then retain a copy of the assignment on its database for the purpose of future plagiarism checking);
  e. that they [the student] understand the consequences of engaging in plagiarism as described in Statute 4.1, part III – Academic Misconduct.

## 9.3 Using references appropriately in your written work

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, in presenting your response to a topic, you are expected to review the literature in the field and incorporate the views of other authors, as expressed in articles and books. In this sense, the authors' views expressed in the literature are used to build up your case. You must formulate your own structure for your writing in response to a topic rather than relying solely on other authors' views. The source of the words or ideas used to support, and as evidence for, your response ***must always be acknowledged.***

When you survey the literature concerning your topic and formulate responses to assignment tasks and topics, you are participating in academic enquiry. The views expressed in the literature for a particular area are not fixed and unchanging. Rather, as authors' published views are constantly challenged and disputed by other writers, the knowledge in the field evolves. You must be aware of this process as you structure your response to their topics and incorporate the views from the literature.

The views of authors expressed in the literature are significant as you respond to your assignment topic. Before forming the structure for your response to the topic, you need to thoroughly overview the field so that you are aware of the findings of the writers in the field. You must frame your response in the context of the topic which you are writing on. In so doing, you can either draw on the literature to support or substantiate your structure or, if the views expressed in the literature differ from your structure, indicate how it is still valid despite the differences.

## 9.4 Use of references in writing

### 9.4.1 Unsuitable use of references

The following sample paragraph for a management topic consists of a string of direct quotations and paraphrases. In this case the writer has failed to demonstrate knowledge of the literature and key concepts beyond the ability to look up relevant texts and journals. That is, there is no comment from the writer, either at the beginning of the paragraph, the end, or throughout the paragraph.

The referencing is also inadequate because the dates have not been included. Also, it is inappropriate to refer to lecture notes because there are no records of spoken comments for others to consult and verify.

**Example 1:**

Organisations operating under rational-legal authority are marked by division of labour, hierarchy, rules and regulations and impersonal relationships (Robbing, ? p.36). This type of authority "allows supervision and control of a large number of individuals engaged in a common objective or task, maximising coordination and organisational efficiency" (MGC Lecture Notes, 2005). "Control is concerned with the methods employed by the organisation to ensure that people perform their tasks in ways which are seen as desirable from the viewpoint of the organisation" (Robbing, ? p. 569).

However, if direct quotations are incorporated in a way which indicates that the writer has grasped the key concepts in the literature, it is vital that the writer indicates that these are exact words from the text by using quotation marks and then indicating their source, whether through the author-date or documentary note methods of citation outlined in Chapter 10. However, direct quotations must be used sparingly. Also, even if the ideas from the text are written in ***your own words***, the source ***must*** still be indicated.

Always include quotation marks and acknowledge the source of the text in the body of the paragraph. It is not appropriate to leave out quotation marks and paragraph referencing, even if the source is listed in the bibliography.

## 9.5 Suitable integration of references

The following sample paragraph for a management topic uses references in an appropriate way. Instead of using direct quotes or paraphrasing, the writer has formulated a summary of the views expressed by the cited authors. That is, the writer has put forward comments on the issue and placed them in the context of the relevant literature.

**Example 2:**

All of the different schools of thought concerning organisational structure view employees as a vital feature, strongly related to an organisation's survival and growth. However, there are differences amongst the schools in that employees are viewed as either rational or social beings. The significance of employees is evident in the comments of Owen (2002, p. 32) when he states that employees are the best investment for managers, and Barnard (2003, p. 39) also acknowledges the input of employees, stating that an organisation is made up of people. Research undertaken through intense observation has led to the view that people (including employees) are rational in that their behaviour is patterned. However, another view is that they are social and this means influenced by nonrational factors such as emotions (Scott 2004, pp. 22–28). Overall, it is clear that employees are integral to organisations and an important consideration for managers in organisations striving for success.

Lines 1–4 contain the writer's point of view. Lines 5–12 incorporate references on which the writer's view is based. Lines 11–12 also include the writer's point of view.

### 9.5.1 Techniques for using an author's ideas

From the above examples, it is clear that you need to use references in a way which is based on your own thoughts and interpretation of other authors' work.

By learning to summarise, you can avoid having to resort to paraphrasing and the overuse of direct quotations. Summarising forces you to reduce others' work to their key points and to capture the essence of their work. The process of eliminating unnecessary detail from the original work forces you to express the material in ***your own words***. You can then include your own comments, demonstrating ***your interpretation*** of the work.

The following approach will assist you to summarise passages:

- read and understand fully the passage;
- write out the main ideas, without the details;
- consider these points as a whole and the purpose for using the summary in relation to the structure in the written piece, that is, make an interpretation of the work. For example, it may not be necessary for the points in the summary to follow the same sequence as in the original passage;
- encapsulate the main ideas from the original passage and the interpretation as if telling someone the essence. Of course jargon or a subject's specialised vocabulary does not have to be changed.

**Example 3:**

**Original source:** Williams, A., Dobson, P. & Walters, M. (1989). *Changing culture: new oganisational approaches.* London: The Institute of Personnel Management, p. 14.

Culture is learnt. Individual beliefs, attitudes and values are gained from the individual's environment. The culture of the oganisation is therefore gained from the environment common to its members. Both the internal and the external environment of the organisation influence culture.

The internal environment comprises the social and technical systems of the organisation. Thus, in part, culture is the product of these socio-technical systems. They comprise the decision-making, planning and control procedures of the organisation, its technology, the procedures for recruitment, selection and training, and the behaviour of other members – in particular, that of the manager and the work group. Culture has its roots as much in beliefs about the demands of the work environment as it does in the personal attitudes and values of individuals.

Externally, the organisation is embedded in social, political, legislative, economic and technological systems. These represent the external environment of the organisation. Those operating in different sectors have different markets, technologies and legal constraints. They have different skill and resource needs. These variations place different demands on organisations and create differing learning environments.

## 9.5.2 A summary

**Example 4:**

In considering an organisation's culture which includes the values, beliefs and attitudes of its members, it is important to recognise that it is shaped by both internal and external environments. Socio-technical systems such as decision-making, planning and controlling constitute the internal environment. The external environment, which can differ across sectors, includes elements such as the social, political and legislative (Williams et al., 1989, p. 14).

The writer has made a clear interpretation of the original passage. The order of the ideas has been changed, probably because the information concerning the role and nature of environments is required as evidence in the written piece, and so this is the focus taken in the student's interpretation of the original passage. Most of the details included in the original have also been eliminated so that only the essence of the passage is captured.

## 9.5.3 Paraphrasing, or writing in your own words

In some subjects, where you are required to deal with set facts in definitions, statutes or Accounting Standards, it may be necessary to paraphrase or write these in your own words. The following steps will assist you with paraphrasing.

After locating the information to be included in the written piece:

- read the passage several times to understand fully the meaning;
- identify and underline the key words and ideas in the passage;
- write out the key points and think of synonyms for the concepts embedded in these words and phrases in the passage. (Remember, however, that if the key words are specialised vocabulary for the subject or jargon, they do not need to be changed);
- use the synonyms or alternate forms of expression as the framework for the paraphrase and write the paraphrase as if relating to someone the content of the passage;
- consider the role played by the paraphrased passage in relation to comments you are making. Indicate for the reader the nature of the role.

The following is an original quotation and one way that it could be paraphrased; the main ideas to be included in the paraphrase are displayed in italics in the original. In the example paraphrase, the writer's comment is at the beginning.

**Example 5:**

**Original source:** Williams, A., Dobson, P. & Walters, M. (1989). *Changing culture: new oganisational approaches*. London: The Institute of Personnel Management, p. 20.

Organisational cultures vary according to the nature of the beliefs, values, and attitudes that are commonly held. These reflect differences in society, history and function.

**A Paraphrase:** As explained by Williams et al. (1989, p. 20), just as beliefs, attitudes and values which express how different society's history and function differ, so too do organisational cultures.

The main ideas have been incorporated in the paraphrase and the organisation of the original has been changed. In the original, the idea expressed in the first sentence is followed by another idea in the second sentence, whereas in the paraphrase, these two ideas are balanced against each other in one sentence. Even though the author's idea has been expressed in the student's own words, the source of the idea must be referenced.

## 9.6 Conclusion

It is ***vital*** that you acknowledge through referencing the ideas and viewpoints of other authors in your written work. It is also very important that your writing is not composed solely of material from texts and articles. Tutors want to see how you have reviewed the literature on the topic and formed your own structure for your piece of writing, based on the body of knowledge or literature in the field.

We state again, that when information from texts or articles is used to support your response to the topic, the sources of references used must be acknowledged and referenced appropriately. There are very serious consequences if this does not occur. A guiding principle is that if words or ideas are taken from a source and used in writing, the source must be acknowledged. Faculties will take steps to detect plagiarism. This may include the use of electronic plagiarism detection software and other methods to compare work submitted for assessment against various databases, which may include the World Wide Web, electronic reference materials and other students' work submitted for assessment. Your work may be subject to this type of checking. The penalties are too great to overlook this very important issue.

The university has a number of resources to enhance academic skills, language and approaches to learning. The library provides assistance in essay writing, and the appropriate use and acknowledgement of sources, including citation techniques.

For further information go to:
http://www.lib.monash.edu.au/learning-skills/
http://www.monash.edu.au/lls/llonline/
http://www.adept.mcpl.monash.edu.au/

On a more positive note, appropriate understanding and use of references in the manner described in this chapter will enhance your written work and improve your learning, perhaps with writing becoming a more meaningful experience and most probably earning higher assessment grades!

# Chapter 10
# Referencing

One of the more technical aspects of assignment writing at university relates to referencing. As there are numerous acceptable systems of referencing, you will need to consult the Unit Outline for each unit in order to ascertain the style preferred by your tutor or unit coordinator. Once the appropriate style has been determined, it is important that all conventions pertaining to that particular style are consistently adopted. The key considerations are, therefore, attention to detail and consistency.

There are a number of different referencing styles which can be adopted for academic writing. The two most common are:

- Author-date systems such the APA (commonly referred to as the American Psychological Association method of citation) or Harvard style
- Numeric systems such as the Vancouver, footnote or endnote systems, often referred to as the "documentary-note" style

This chapter examines the nature and benefits of referencing and provides information pertaining to the APA style and footnoting.

## 10.1 What is referencing?

Referencing or citing refers to the acknowledgement of various sources of information you have used in preparing your written assignments. It means acknowledging the authority of an author or proof or evidence in support of your argument.

The works to which you have referred should be acknowledged in two places – "in-text" and "end-text". In-text referencing means that you place a citation directly after you have used the information. This could be at the beginning of a sentence, the end of a paragraph, the end of a sentence, or after a direct quotation.

On the other hand, the end-text referencing refers to a reference list or bibliography, which is a complete list of all the sources you have used in the preparation of your assignment and is always placed at the end of an assignment. End-text referencing should provide complete information concerning each source, including the names of the authors, year of publication, title of the text or journal, edition, page and volume numbers, the name of the publisher and place of publication.

## 10.2 When should you reference?

When you:

- Quote the author's exact words
- Copy the author's tables, figures and/or diagrams
- Paraphrase an author's ideas using your own words
- Summarise the author's ideas

## 10.3 Why should you reference your work?

There are numerous benefits of referencing. Referencing appropriately:

- avoids plagiarism and the subsequent failing of the assessment and/or unit
- lends credibility to your view in that citing other works substantiates your own line of argument
- gives recognition to authors/sources whose arguments/empirical research you have used
- allows the reader of your assignment to locate the articles, texts and electronic sources you have used in your writing
- demonstrates to the reader the breadth of your research, that is, the range of sources you have used
- demonstrates how up-to-date your research is
- demonstrates the depth of the research i.e. how effectively you have utilised the extant literature in a particular field or discipline.

## 10.4 Referencing using the APA style

Although very popular, there appears to be no one universally accepted author-date system. The referencing style adopted by the Faculty of Business and Economics is the APA Style (5th edition), which is published by the American Psychological Association (APA). This chapter is an introductory guide to using the APA Style to reference information sources most relevant to students of business and economics. Both print and electronic sources are covered. It is important to note the faculty exception to the APA style rules on page 65.

The key guides to APA Style, and the references for writing this chapter, are:

> American Psychological Association. (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed). Washington, D.C.: Author.
>
> American Psychological Association. (2007). *APA style guide to electronic references.* Washington, D.C.: Author.
>
> American Psychological Association. (2005). *Concise rules of APA style*. Washington, D.C.: Author.

The following Monash University Library guide was also extensively consulted and has been a source of examples and commentary:

> Monash University Library. (2007). *American Psychological Association (APA) style examples*. Retrieved from http://www.lib.monash.edu.au/tutorials/citing/apa.html

Refer to these publications if you require further information on the APA style, especially if you are undertaking a thesis or need to reference a work not specifically covered in this chapter. Copies are held at Monash University libraries – check the catalogue for details. Advice on referencing is also available from Learning Skills Advisers in the Library. You can also go to the APA Style website for information at: http://apastyle.apa.org/

The following sections of this chapter focus respectively on creating firstly, in-text citations and secondly, a reference list.

### 10.4.1 Creating in-text citations

The term “in-text” means that you cite an author or source within the text of your assignment, at a point where his or her point/argument appears. Every fact or idea which you have used to establish your own line of argument must be accurately and consistently cited.

Using the APA style, the in-text citation should:

- show the last name/s of the author (or authors)
- include the year of publication
- cite the author names in the order in which they appear in the source
- within the brackets use "&", but in the text use "and" (e.g. see *Three-five authors* below)
- indicate page number (if it is a direct quotation, statistics, a table or diagram)

The following examples illustrate generally how in-text citations can be used in assignments.

> Deegan (2002) suggests there are numerous methods which may be adopted.
>
> OR
>
> Few authors have approached the topic in this way (Deegan, 2002).

If you have cited the arguments/ideas of more than one author, the in-text citation would show:

> Consideration of expatriate adjustment is becoming increasingly important (Mahoney & Trigg, 2001; Stone, 2002).

Please note that if you cite several authors as in the above example, (Mahoney & Trigg, 2001; Stone, 2002), these should also be in alphabetical order i.e. Mahoney before Stone.
See ***Multiple references*** below.

***One author***

> …the results were inconclusive (Hawkins, 2003).
>
> Hawkins (2003) reported that the results were inconclusive.

***Two authors***

> …(Bovey & Hede, 2001)
>
> Bovey and Hede (2001) argue...

***Three – five authors***

First time cited

> …(Clegg, Hardy & Nord, 1996)
>
> Clegg, Hardy and Nord (1996) assert that...

Thereafter, type only the first author name, then "et al."

> …(Clegg et al., 1996)
>
> Clegg et al. (1996) assert that....

***Six or more authors***

- Use only the family name of the first author, followed by "et al." the first and subsequent times
- In the reference list entry include only the first six authors. If there are more than six authors, after the sixth name type "et al." and omit the subsequent names

***Multiple works by the same author cited at the same time***

- Enter the years of publication in date order

> …(Jones, 2000, 2001)
>
> Jones (2000, 2001) applies the same principles to…

***Multiple works by the same author in the same year***

• Differentiate the citations by adding an a,b,c…suffix to the year

• Suffixes also appear in the reference list

• Reference list entries for the same author are ordered alphabetically by title.

The first entry receives the suffix "a", the next "b", etc.

…(Brown, 1998a, 1998b)

Brown (1998a)… later in the text… Brown (1998b)

***Unknown author***

• If no author is stated in the work, use the first few words of the title in place of the author

• For an article or chapter use double quotation marks

As reported in the business press ("Singapore Profit," 2007)...

• For a periodical book, report or brochure, use italics

According to the brochure, *Succeeding in Exams* (1979)…

• When the author is given as "Anonymous", cite as (Anonymous, 1997)

***An organisation as the author***

(Reserve Bank of Australia, 2007)

• If the organisation has a well recognised abbreviation, it can be cited as follows:

First time cited… (International Monetary Fund [IMF], 1997)

Subsequently… (IMF, 1997)

***Multiple references***

• List alphabetically, separated by semi-colons

There is considerable support for this view (Allen, 2001; Bryson & Lodge, 1999; Wong, 2003).

***Direct quotation***

• In addition to author name and year the page number must be stated.

"The key to understanding microeconomics is to realise that its overwhelming focus is on the role of prices" (Gittins, 2006, p. 18).

Gittins (2006) suggests that "the key to understanding microeconomics is to realise that its overwhelming focus is on the role of prices" (p. 18).

• In the case of an electronic source (e.g. a website) that has no page numbers, specify the paragraph e.g. (Perrin, 2006, para. 4).

***Citing a secondary source (i.e. a source referred to in another work)***

For example, you read a 2006 article by Friedman in which he refers to an article by Chang, published in 1997.

To cite Chang in your writing, the following formats apply:

…(Chang, 1997, as cited in Friedman, 2006).

Chang (1997, as cited in Friedman, 2006) suggests that this is inconsistent…

Friedman (2006) cited Chang (1997) as arguing for…

• In the reference list only include an entry for the work that you actually read (i.e. Friedman's article)

## 10.4.2 Creating a reference list

A reference list is a list of all the sources you have used in the body of your assignment. It is arranged alphabetically according to the authors' last names and is placed at the end of the assignment. A number of conventions apply to the reference list:

- Begin the list on a new page, with centred title, "Reference List" or "References"
- Each entry should have a hanging indent of 1.25 cm or 5–7 spaces (i.e. the first line is fully left justified and the following lines are indented 5–7 spaces)
- Separate entries with a space
- List entries in alphabetical order by author name
- Where a reference has no author, and the title is used instead (as with some newspaper articles), list according to the first significant word in the title (i.e. ignore "The", "A", "An")
- Where there are two articles with the same author(s) and date, list them alphabetically by article title and assign a suffix (a, b, c…) to each date
- If the same author is cited for works from different years, list the references from the earliest publication date in date order
- Give organisation names in full
- Ensure that all references cited in the text are listed (except for "unpublished" items, such as correspondence or interviews)
- Ensure that all listed items have a corresponding in-text citation
- In general, if the city of publication is a major city or capital city, the name of the city is sufficient, (e.g. New York, Boston, Sydney, London, Stockholm). Otherwise, the state or province is added (e.g. Camberwell, Vic.; Crows Nest, NSW; Englewood Cliffs, NJ; Harmondsworth, Middlesex)
- For countries other than the United States the country name is also added if the city is not a major or capital city. In practice some deviation from the *Publication Manual* occurs, especially for Australian sources (e.g. Crows Nest, NSW, rather than Crows Nest, New South Wales, Australia)

A sample reference list demonstrating the application of these rules is provided at the end of the APA style section of this chapter. Be sure to include the exact punctuation and spacing shown in the examples.

### *Print sources*

#### Books

General format:

Author surname, Author initial(s). (Year of publication). *Title of book* (edition number if not the 1st edition). Place of publication: Name of publisher.

- In the title of the book, only the first letter of the title, subtitle and any proper nouns are capitalised
- The title and subtitle are in italics
- For a revised edition of a book, the abbreviation is (Rev. ed.)

> Gittins, R. (2006). *Gittins' guide to economics*. Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin.
>
> Luthans, F. (2002). *Organisational behavior* (9th ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill Irwin.
>
> Mahoney, D. & Trigg, M. (2001). *International business:* A managerial perspective (2nd ed.). Sydney: Pearson Education.

- If there are more than six authors, after the sixth author type "et al." and omit the subsequent names

> Mussen, P., Rosenzweig, M. R., Aronson, E., Elkind, D., Feshbach, S., Geiwitz, P. J., et al. (1973). *Psychology: An introduction*. Lexington, MA: Heath.

**Edited book**

- Follows the book format, with the editor's name followed by (Ed.), or (Eds.) if more than one editor

> Clegg, S. R., Hardy, C., & Nord, W. R. (Eds.). (1996). *Handbook of organisation studies*. London: Sage Publications.

**Chapter in an edited book**

- Type "In" before the editor's name(s)
- The format of the editor's name(s) is: Initial(s). Family name (i.e. the reverse of the author names)
- The page numbers of the chapter are included, i.e. (pp. 192–199)
- In the following example, the state, "Vic." is included in the location details as Camberwell is not a major city:

> Macauley, P. & Green, R. (2007). Supervising publishing from the doctorate.
>
> In C. Denholm & T. Evans (Eds.), *Supervising doctorates downunder: Keys to effective supervision in Australia and New Zealand* (pp. 192–199). Camberwell, Vic.: ACER Press.

**Journal article**

General format:

Author family name, Author initial(s). (Year of publication). Title of the article. *Title of the Journal, volume number* (issue number), page numbers of the article.

- Only the first letter of the article title, subtitle and any proper nouns are capitalised
- The first letter of each significant word in the journal title is capitalised
- The journal title and volume number are in italics
- If there are more than six authors, after the sixth author type "et al." and omit the subsequent names (see the example in the Books section)

> Milner, L. M. & Fodness, D. (1996). Product gender perceptions: The case of China. *International Marketing Review*, 13(4), 40-51.

**Magazine**

- If there is a volume number, it follows the magazine title, in italics. In the example below, 159 is the volume number, and the page number is 46.

> MacLeod, S. (2002, April 8). An olive branch or stick? *Time*, 159, 46.
>
> Guilliat, S. (2005, March 26). Leap of faith. *Good Weekend: The Age Magazine*, 24-31.

**Newspaper article – print and microfiche**

- Precede the page number with "p." or if more than one page, "pp." (For an article starting on page 1, then continuing and ending on page 3, the format would be pp. 1, 3.)

> Hopkins, P. (2004, January 7). Parmalat cooked the books worldwide: Police. *The Age*, p. 2.

**Newspaper article – no author**

- The article title takes the place of an author

Singapore profit soars despite cost hit. (2007, November 2). *The Australian*, p. 37.

- For the in-text citation, use the first few words of the title, capitalised and in double quotation marks ("Singapore Profit," 2007)

**Reports from organisations**

- Includes, but not limited to, company annual reports and reports from government bodies
- Where the author is the publisher, type "Author" after the location

  Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation. (2001). *Annual report 2001*. Tokyo: Author.

- If a report has an identifying number, include it in brackets, as follows:

  Productivity Commission. (2002). *Review of automotive assistance* (Inquiry Report No. 25). Canberra: Author.

  Department of Industry Science and Technology. (2004). *Australian business innovation: A strategic analysis*. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service.

  House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs. (1992). *Half way to equal: Report of the inquiry into equal opportunity and equal status for women in Australia.* Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service.

**Working paper/research report**

- Include the working paper/report number, in brackets
- In the location details, omit the state or country name if part of the university name e.g. San Diego: University of California
- Include the university name and the name of the publishing entity (e.g. faculty, department, school, research centre) in that order

  Allen, D. E. (1993). *Competitive advantage and approaches to investment appraisal: Procedures in Australia, Britain and Japan* (Working Paper 93.23). Perth, Western Australia: Curtin University of Technology, School of Economics and Finance.

**Thesis – unpublished**

- City, state and country details are required for non-U.S. unpublished theses

  Waddell, D. (1995). *Using resistance positively to implement new manufacturing methods in industry*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Monash University, Melbourne, Vic., Australia.

**Conference proceedings**

- Use the same basic format as a chapter in an edited book
- The title of the conference proceedings is in italics

  Farr, R. (1989). The social and collective nature of representations. In J.P. Forgas and J.M. Innes (Eds.), *Recent advances in social psychology: An international perspective. Proceedings of the xxiv International Congress of Psychology of the International Union of Psychological Science. U. Psy.S., Sydney, Australia, August 28 – September 2, 1988* (Vol. 1, pp. 157–166). Amsterdam: Elsevier.

**Encyclopedia or dictionary**

- Reference works, such as dictionaries and encyclopedias are not normally cited unless you are using them to make precise definitions of terminology

  Warner, M. (Ed.). (2002). *International encyclopedia of business and management* (2nd ed., Vols. 1–8). London: Thomson Learning.

**Interviews and other personal communications**

- Personal communications are not included in the reference list as they are inaccessible to the reader, but are cited in the text in the following ways:

  R. Smith (personal communication, August 15, 2007)…
  …(R. Smith, personal communication, August 15, 2007)

### *Electronic sources*

In general, the basic formats that apply to referencing the various types of print sources also apply to their electronic equivalents, except that the publisher details are often omitted, and either a Uniform Resource Locator (URL), Digital Object Identifier (DOI), or database name is included.

It is not necessary to include a retrieval date (the date you accessed the information) for electronic journal articles, news articles, reports, theses and proceedings, where the content is not expected to change. Examples of each of these reference types follow.

However, a retrieval date *is necessary* in references for a source on the open Web that does not have a date or if it is likely that the content of the source may change or be updated in the future. Please see examples under Websites below.

Be sure to include the exact punctuation as shown in the examples. Where a URL or DOI is part of a reference, do not end the reference with a full stop.

The following examples demonstrate the faculty's application of the APA style for common electronic information sources encountered by Business and Economics students. After familiarising yourself with the contents of this section, if you require further details, or information on citing electronic sources not covered in this section (e.g. electronic journal preprints and Weblogs), consult the *APA Style Guide to Electronic References,* which revises and updates Section 4.16 of the *Publication Manual.* Advice on referencing is also available from Learning Skills Advisers in the Library.

**Electronic articles – from Monash databases**

*Important Faculty of Business and Economics exception to the APA style rules*

When a journal, news or magazine article is available in PDF format from a database or electronic journal collection that is listed in the Monash University Library database menu, reference it as you would a print article – i.e. consider the PDF article identical to the hard copy (print) version of it. If it has a Digital Object Identifier (DOI), this can optionally be included at the end of the reference (see below).

If an article is available in a Monash database only in HTML format, end the reference with the database name in the format: "Retrieved from [database name] database". Because HTML articles may have no hard copy version, or differ in format from the hard copy version, the source database name is required in the reference. A common example is electronic versions of newspaper articles. As an example of how to reference an HTML article, see ***Electronic newspaper article – from a Monash database*** (below).

These instructions are an exception to the usual practice described in the *APA Style Guide to Electronic References*.

References to other types of material from Monash databases (e.g. electronic books, encyclopedias and reports) require the inclusion of the database name. Be guided by the following examples.

**Electronic journal article – with a Digital Object Identifier (DOI)**

- Publishers are increasingly assigning Digital Object Identifiers to articles. They are usually printed on the first page. When a DOI is provided the following format can be used

> Baruch, S., Karolyi, A. G. & Lemmon, M. L. (2007). Multimarket trading and liquidity: Theory and evidence. *Journal of Finance, 62*(5), 2169-2200. doi: 10.1111/j.1540–6261.2007.01272.x

**Electronic journal article – from a free journal on the Web**

- Give the URL of the article after "Retrieved from"
- The following reference is to an html document, with no page numbers to record

> Ciocchetti, C. A. (2001). Monitoring employee e-mail: Efficient workplaces vs employee privacy. *Duke Law & Technology Review, 0026.* Retrieved from http://www.law.duke.edu/journals/dltr/articles/2001dltr0026.html

**Electronic newspaper article (html format) – from a Monash database (e.g. Factiva)**

- Follows the basic format for a print newspaper, followed by "Retrieved from [database name] database"

> Creedy, C. (2007, August 21). Business travellers' fares go skywards. *The Australian*, p. 24. Retrieved from Factiva database.

**Electronic newspaper article – from the Web, open access**

- The following reference is to an html document, so there are often no page numbers to record

> Kaneko, M. (2007, October 16). Investment funds focused on 'womenomics' gaining attention. *The Japan Times Online*. Retrieved from http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/nb20071016a3.html

**Reports from Monash databases**

A wide range of reports are available via Monash databases including company, industry, market and country reports and profiles. Both PDF and HTML formats are used. When referencing any report or profile include the name of the database from which you obtained it, according to the format in the next four examples. As such reports are updated periodically, include the published date of the version of the report you are using.

**Company report – from a Monash database (e.g. DatAnalysis)**

- DatAnalysis reports are generated on demand (via the Full Co.Report button) in html format. The date given is the date the report was printed or downloaded – it appears at the top of the report

> Aspect Huntley. (2007, December 18). *Full company report: Qantas Airways Limited*. Retrieved from DatAnalysis database.

**Company profile – from a Monash database (e.g. Business Source Premier)**

> Datamonitor. (2007, July 27). *Air France KLM: Company profile*. Retrieved from Business Source Premier database.

**Industry report – from a Monash database (e.g. IBISWorld)**

- If a report has an identifying number, as in this case, include it in brackets after the title

> IBISWorld. (2007, August 29). *Biscuit manufacturing in Australia* (C2163). Retrieved from IBISWorld database.

**Country report – from a Monash database (e.g. eiu.com)**

> Economist Intelligence Unit. (2007, December). *Country report: Brazil*. Retrieved from eiu.com database.

**Electronic book – from a Monash e-book database (e.g. Ebook Library)**

- If a print version exists, reference it as you would the print version
- If there is only an electronic version of the book use the following format (publisher details are not required, but include the name of the database, preceded by "Available from")

> Lowe, B. (2007). *Business-to-business marketing practices in China*. Available from Ebook Library database.

**Online encyclopedia – Monash database (e.g. Blackwell Reference Online)**

- The following example refers to the entry for the term "contingencies"
- Include a retrieval date, in case the encyclopedia is updated in the future

> Schattke, R. W. (2005). Contigencies. In C.L. Cooper (Ed.), *The Blackwell encyclopedia of management*. Retrieved October 5, 2007, from Blackwell Reference Online database.

**Lecture notes, from Blackboard (MUSO)**

- Only minor reference to lecture notes, if at all necessary, should be made in a piece of student writing. Lecturers expect students to provide references that show evidence of their own research
- The format of the notes is included, in square brackets

> Luca, E. (2007). *Week 6*: *Interpersonal communication in context* [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved from MGF1100/2100, Monash University Studies Online: https://my.monash.edu.au/muso/blackboard/login/

**Research report or working paper – on the Web**

- If the report/paper has an identifying number, include it in brackets
- Include the name of the publishing organisation before the URL

> Cockerell, L. & Pennings, S. (2007). *Private business investment in Australia* (Research Discussion Paper RDP 2007-09). Retrieved from Reserve Bank of Australia: http://www.rba.gov.au/rdp/RDP2007–09.pdf

- In the case of a university working paper, include the university name, and the name of the publishing entity (e.g. faculty, department, school, research centre) in that order

> Bardoel, E.A., De Cieri, H. & Tepe, S. (2006). *A framework for developing a work/life strategy in a multinational enterprise (MNE)*. (Department of Management Working Paper Series 1/06). Retrieved from Monash University, Faculty of Business and Economics: http://www.buseco.monash.edu.au/mgt/research/working-papers/2006/wp1–06.pdf

**Conference paper – on the Web**

- Include the name of the publishing organisation before the URL

> Kajewski, M. (2006). Emerging technologies changing our service delivery model. *Click06: ALIA 2006 Biennial Conference*. Retrieved from Australian Library and Information Association Web site: http://conferences.alia.org.au/alia2006/Papers/Mary_Ann_Kajewski.pdf

**Electronic thesis – on the Web**

- In the location details the state name is not required if part of the university name

> Watters, R. (2004). *The organisational and global environments relationship: An investigation of the key factors*. (Doctoral dissertation, Victoria University, Melbourne. Retrieved from http://wallaby.vu.edu.au/adt-VVUT/public/adt-VVUT20041214.155232/

**Annual report – from an organisation Website**

- In the following example, as the author is also the publisher, it is not necessary to include the publisher name after "Retrieved from"

> Ford Motor Company. (2007). *Fast forward: 2006 annual report*. Retrieved from http://www.ford.com/doc/2006_AR.pdf

**Government report – on the Web**

> Department of Health and Aging. (2000). *National medicines policy*. Retrieved from http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/Publishing.nsf/Content/nmp-objectives-policy.htm/$FILE/nmp2000.pdf

**Websites**

General format:

Author/editor surname, Author/editor initial(s). (Year, month day of last update, or copyright year). *Title of the page/document*. Retrieved Month day, year, from URL

- If an author/editor cannot be identified, use the name of the organisation that publishes the site. If an organisation name is lacking too, the title of the document or page takes the place of author/editor details at the beginning of the reference
- If it is not clear from the author name who the publisher of the site is, include the publisher's name before the URL (see the Cockerell and Pennings example under ***Research report or working paper – on the Web)***
- Include a retrieval date in references for a source on the open Web that does not have a date or if it is likely that the content of the source may change or be updated in the future

  Business Victoria. (2007, October 8). *Starting a business*. Retrieved October 31, 2007, from http://www.business.vic.gov.au/BUSVIC/LANDING//SEC01.html

- Where no date is given on the site, type "n.d." in place of a date

  Shell. (n.d.). *The energy challenge*. Retrieved October 31, 2007, from http://www.shell.com/home/content/envirosoc-en/energy_challenge/the_challenge_000407.html

**Data files available on the Web**

- The words "Data file" are included as shown
- A retrieved date is included as the data is periodically updated

  Reserve Bank of Australia. (2007). *Domestic banking fee income* [Data file]. Retrieved November 15, 2007, from http://www.rba.gov.au/Statistics/Bulletin/index.html

**Film, DVD, video**

- In the author position, type the name of the producer or director
- The location is the country of origin of the work

  Achbar, M. & Simpson, B. (Producers). (2003). The corporation [DVD]. Canada: BigPicture Media Corporation.

**Radio, TV**

- In the author position, give the name of the producer or director

  Smith, R. (Director). (2007, May 24). *Crude* [Television broadcast]. Sydney: ABC-TV.

**Podcast**

- In the following example, *All in the Mind* is the name of the series that featured the debate

  Mitchell, N. (Producer). (2007, September 1). The nature of fear debate: 2007 Australian Science Festival. *All in the Mind*. Podcast retrieved from http://www.abc.net.au/rn/allinthemindstories/2007/2016150.htm

**E-mail and other personal communications**

- Personal communications are not included in the reference list as they are inaccessible to the reader, but are cited in the text in the following ways:

  R. Smith (personal communication, August 15, 2007)…
  …(R. Smith personal communication, August 15, 2007)

**Sample reference list in APA style**

**Reference List**


Bovey, W. H. & Hede, A. (2001). Resistance to organisational change: The role of cognitive and affective processes. *Leadership & Organisation Development Journal*, 22(8), 372–382.

Creedy, C. (2005, January 28). Low cost flight paths lead to Asia. *The Australian*, p. 26. Retrieved from Factiva database.

Creedy, C. (2007, August 21). Business travellers' fares go skywards. *The Australian*, p. 24. Retrieved from Factiva database.

Department of Industry Science and Technology. (2004). *Australian business innovation: A strategic analysis*. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service.

Macauley, P. & Green, R. (2007). Supervising publishing from the doctorate. In C. Denholm & T. Evans (Eds.), *Supervising doctorates downunder: Keys to effective supervision in Australia and New Zealand* (pp. 192–199). Camberwell, Vic.: ACER Press.

Mahoney, D. & Trigg, M. (2001). *International business: A managerial perspective* (2nd ed.). Sydney: Pearson Education.

Milner, L. M. & Fodness, D. (1996). Product gender perceptions: The case of China. *International Marketing Review*, 13(4), 40-51.

Shell. (n.d.). *The energy challenge*. Retrieved October 31, 2007, from http://www.shell.com/home/content/envirosoc-en/energy_challenge/the_challenge_000407.html

Singapore profit soars despite cost hit. (2007, November 2). *The Australian*, p. 37.

Smith, A. (2007a). Emerging in between: The multi-level governance of renewable energy in the English regions. *Energy Policy*, 35(12), 6266–6280. doi: 10.1016/j.enpol.2007.07.023

Smith, A. (2007b). Translating sustainabilities between green niches and socio-technical regimes. *Technology Analysis & Strategic Management*, 19(4), 427–450. doi: 10.1080/09537320701403334

Warner, M. (Ed.). (2002). *International encyclopedia of business and management* (2nd ed.). London: Thomson Learning.


## 10.5 Footnoting

The documentary-note system is a numeric system which may incorporate either footnotes or endnotes. As with all systems of referencing you will need to consult your Unit Outline, tutor or unit co-ordinator to establish which form of numeric system is required.

## 10.5.1 In-text citations using footnotes

This section of the chapter on referencing covers in-text citations using footnotes:

- When you need to cite a direct quotation or paraphrase the ideas of an author, you should place a numeric marker (a superscript Arabic numeral) at the appropriate point in the body of the text. Numbers are usually placed at the end of a sentence or clause and before all punctuation marks except the full stop at the end of a sentence.

*For example:*

> This approach takes into consideration several significant factors. [3]
>
> [3] R. Stone, Human resource management, John Wiley & Sons, Milton, Qld., 2002, pp. 54-65.

Full details must be given in the footnote at the first mention of any work cited. Subsequent citations should be shortened whenever possible.

*For example:*

> [4] Stone, p. 32
>
> [5] ibid.
>
> [6] id.

- The corresponding citation should be placed at the bottom of the page. Latin terms such as "ibid" (ibidem – in the same place); "op cit." (opera citato – in the work previously cited); "loc cit." (loco citato – in the place cited) and "id." (idem – the same) can be used for second and subsequent citations. The year is positioned after the place of publication.

- In relation to tables and figures, the notes are placed at the base of the table or figure and not at the bottom of the page.

- A Bibliography is placed at the end of the assignment. According to the Style Manual (2002), the term "bibliography" refers to a list of sources used for the assignment plus any sources the author considers to be of interest to the reader. For academic purposes it may be more appropriate to use the term "Reference List" which means the list of sources an author has cited for a particular assignment or paper, however you will need to consult with your tutor to establish whether a Bibliography or a Reference List is required.

- Business Law and Taxation students should consult with their unit coordinators and tutors regarding the specific referencing system required for their discipline. The following publications and websites may also prove helpful (please note: this list is not to be used as an example of APA style):

  Fong, C. (1998), *Australian Legal Citation* – A Guide, Prospect, Sydney.

  Melbourne University Law Review Association Inc., (1999), *Australian Guide to Legal Citation*, LULRA Inc., Melbourne, (see:http://www.law.unimelb.edu.au/mulr/aglc.htm).

  Rozenberg, P. (1998), *Australian Guide to Uniform Legal Citation*, LBC Information Services, Sydney, (a preliminary version of the electronic-materials section is available at: http://www.murdoch.edu.au/elaw/issues/v4n4/rozenb44.html).

  Stuhmcke, A. (1998), *Legal Referencing, Butterworths*, Sydney.

  *Australian Guide to Legal Citation* can be accessed or purchased at: http://mulr.law.unimelb.edu.au/aglc.asp.

  The PDF version is 167 pages long, and available at: http://mulr.law.unimelb.edu.au/PDFs/aglc_dl.pdf

There are various ways in which to present footnotes, however, some basic rules apply:

- Numeric markers (starting from 1) are numbered consecutively from the beginning to the end of the assignment
- Only one number is used at a time even if more than one source is being cited
- Footnotes are placed at the bottom of the page
- Each footnote is separated from another by a single line space
- Each footnote begins with a capital letter
- Each footnote ends with a full stop

### *Print sources*

**One author**

> This approach takes into consideration several significant factors. [3]
>
> [3] R. Stone, *Human resource management*, John Wiley & Sons, Milton, Qld., 2002, pp. 54–65.

Full details must be given in the footnote at the first mention of any work cited. Subsequent citations should be shortened whenever possible.

*For example:*

> [4] Stone, p. 32
>
> [5] ibid.
>
> [6] id.

**Two or three authors**

> Mahoney and Trigg have examined a number of issues in relation to…[6]
>
> [6] D. Mahoney & M. Trigg, *International business: a managerial perspective*, 2nd edn, Pearson Education, Sydney, 2001.

*The initials of the authors are placed first in the footnote.*

**Two or three authors – journal article**

> Folger and Starlicki differentiate resentment-based resistance on the premise that perceptions of organisational fairness provide grounds for resistant behaviour.[4]
>
> [4] R. Folger & D.P. Starlicki, "Unfairness and resistance to change: hardship as mistreatment", *Journal of Organisational Change Management*, Vol. 12, No. 1, 1999, pp. 35–50.

*The year is positioned before the page numbers.*

**More than three authors**

> A boundaryless organisation is one "whose design is not defined, or limited to, the horizontal, vertical or external boundaries imposed by a predefined structure".[8]
>
> [8] S.P. Robbins, R. Bergman, I. Stagg & M. Coulter, *Management*, 3rd edn, Prentice Hall, Sydney, 2003, p. 292.

*Any edition after the first edition should be cited. Note that a full stop is not required for this abbreviation.*

**One author citing another**

> Despite the prevalence of phased transitional models supporting organisational change many companies undervalue the role of process and people.[12]
>
> [12] K. Lewin in C. Agocs, "Institutionalised resistance to organisational change: denial, inaction and repression", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 16, No. 9, 1997, pp. 917–931.

**Chapter in an edited book**

Current levels of competition demand that firms consider new ways of organising.[19]

[19] Sanchez-Runde, S. Massini & J. Quintanilla, "People management dualities", in (eds) A. M. Pettigrew, R. Whittington, L. Melin, C. Sanchez-Runde, F.A.J. van den Bosch, W. Ruigrok and T. Numagami, *Innovative forms of organising*, Sage Publications, London, 2003, pp. 198–221.

*Two entries are required – the author of the chapter as well as the editors of the book. No full stop required for the abbreviation of "editors".*

**Multiple works**

Identification of this process has been explored through a number of theories all of which recognise the need for breaking with the past, transitioning through a period of uncertainty and identifying with the new.[23]

[23] H. Bovey & A. Hede, "Resistance to organisational change: the role of defence mechanisms", *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, Vol. 16, No. 8, 2001, pp. 534–548; W.H. Bovey & A. Hede, "Resistance to organisational change: the role of cognitive and affective processes", *Leadership & Organisation Development Journal*, Vol. 22, No. 8, 2001, pp. 372–382; D.M. Waddell, T.G. Cummings & C.G. Worley, *Organisation Development and Change*, Pacific Rim 2nd edn., Nelson Thomson Learning, South Melbourne, 2004.

*If you want to refer to more than one source, you need only use **one** numeric marker. The bibliographic information about each source should then be provided in the footnote.*

**Author unknown but there is a sponsoring organisation**

The role of government in developing innovation in the community is increasing in importance.[16]

[16] Department of Industry, Science and Technology, *Australian business innovation: a strategic analysis*, Australian Government Printing Service, Canberra, 2004.

**Newspaper article – specified author**

Italian magistrates were in the process of unravelling Parmalat's global units when…[21]

[21] P. Hopkins, "Parmalat cooked the books worldwide: police", *The Age*, 7 January, 2004, Business, p. 2.

**Newspaper article – unspecified author**

The Tax Office has asked 1000 of its staff to undergo controversial aptitude and psychological tests.[8]

[8] "Commission rejects plan to test Tax Office staff", *The Age*, 7 January, 2004, News p. 3.

**Audio-visual material including films, videos, TV and radio programs**

Some doubt was cast on the probity of the producers.[49]

[49] "What are we going to do about taxation anyway?", television program, *Corporate World Series*, SBS Television, Melbourne, 24 May, 2003.

**Unpublished works**

Hull and Read suggest that in the main, employees want an organisational environment where there is mutual respect.[19]

[19] D. Hull & V. Read, "Simply the best workplaces in Australia", working paper, ACIRRT, University of Sydney, 2003.

*Note that the title of the working paper is not italicised. Nor is the place of publication stated as it is inferred.*

**Personal communication**

There were a number of limitations to the study.[81]

[81] B. Cooper, Monash University, pers. comm., 31 January, 2008.

*This entry would not appear in the Bibliography.*

**Conference paper**

There appears to be no universally accepted definition of innovation.[33]

[33] S. Warne & A. Simon, "The difficulties of defining, measuring and leading organisational innovation", in *Proceedings of the sixth international research conference on quality, innovation and knowledge management*, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 2003, pp. 44–48.

**Government publications**

Attracting appropriate defence personnel has been an issue in the past, however, staff retention is proving to be an even more difficult task.[11]

[11] Defence personnel to 2005: our future defence force, Department of Defence, Canberra, 2001.

**Parliamentary publications**

Consideration of this point was made in the early 1990s.[5]

[5] House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal & Constitutional Affairs, *Half way to equal: report of the inquiry into equal opportunity and equal status for women in Australia*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, April, 1992.

**Thesis**

Managers may find it useful to consider resistance as a potential positive to change implementation.[4]

[4] D. Waddell, "Using resistance positively to implement new manufacturing methods in industry", PhD thesis, Monash University, 1995.

### *Electronic sources*

**Journal article from database – PDF version**

Zhang and Yu argue that it is essential to understand the factors influencing consumer demand for e-trading services.[18]

[18] M.M. Zhang & T.T. Yu, "Analysis of demand for electronic stock trading: a statistical approach", *Journal of Accounting and Finance Research*, Vol. 10, No. 4, 2002, pp. 49–59.

**Journal article from database – HTML full-text version**

Zhang and Yu argue that it is essential to understand the factors influencing consumer demand for e-trading services.[7]

[7] M.M. Zhang & T.T. Yu, "Analysis of demand for electronic stock trading: a statistical approach", *Journal of Accounting and Finance Research*, Vol. 10, No. 4, 2002, pp. 49–59. Retrieved from Proquest database.

*The on-line version of the article is a text version and requires reference to the database.*

**Journal article from the internet – no specified author**

Some of the negative consequences of poorly handled change management can include valued staff leaving the organisation, delays in important projects and a decline in productivity.[27]

[27] "Overview of change management", BPR Online Learning Centre 2003, http://www.prosci.com/Change_managementOverview.htm, viewed 16 February, 2004.

**Article from the internet**

Brand asset management enables companies to maximise the long-term value of their brands from two important perspectives.[33]

[33] S. Davis, "Principles of brand asset management", American Marketing Association, *AMA Newsletter*, Vol. 1, No. 46, 2001, http://www.marketing power.com, viewed 26 November, 2003.

**CD-ROM – conference paper**

Empirical research by Luca and Gray suggests that the contribution of knowledge workers to organisational performance is yet to be determined.[51]

[51] E. Luca & J. Gray, "Are Australian knowledge workers prepared to go the 'extra mile'? OCB in an Australian context", in Proceedings of the *17th ANZAM Conference 2003*, CD-ROM, Edith Cowan University, WA.

**Electronic magazine**

Loyalty programs are still popular amongst corporate travellers.[16]

[16] "Airline news", *American Express Corporate Travel Newsletter*, revised 7 September, 2003, http://www.aexp.be/Topics/TravellersTools, viewed 2 July, 2007.

**Online book**

Relationship marketing is by no means a new concept.[22]

[22] M. Christopher, A. Payne & D. Ballantyne, *Relationship marketing: creating shareholder value*, Monash eBook Collection, http: www.netLibrary.com/ebook, viewed 5 May, 2008.

**Online newspaper**

Eichenwald suggested that former Enron executives were pressed by prosecutors into providing information implicating others.[41]

[41] Eichenwald, "Ex-Enron figure reported near a plea of Guilty", *New York Times*, 8 January, 2004, p. 4, http:www.nytimes.com/2004/01/08business08ENROhtml?hp, viewed 20 September, 2007.

**Web page of an organisation**

Throughout the early twentieth century, Royal Dutch Shell expanded its operations through acquisitions in Europe, Africa and the Americas.[9]

[9] Shell, revised 2007, http:www.shell.com, viewed 9 November, 2007.

## 10.5.2 Creating the bibliography

The bibliography at the end of the assignment should include all the works which were used in its preparation, whether you cited them directly or not.

- Each reference in the bibliography should be listed alphabetically according to the first author's family name.
- Some academics prefer a hanging indentation at the beginning of each reference. (Please check your Unit Outline or ask your tutor.)

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# Chapter 11
# Presentation skills

Students are often asked to deliver individual or group presentations as part of their units of study. As with all other assignments, the first thing to do is to check the Unit Outline to examine the presentation task, the criteria to be adopted for assessing the presentation, the length of time allowed for the presentation and any other requirements. Check with your tutor or unit co-ordinator for specific details.

## 11.1 What is a presentation?

A presentation may be defined as a carefully planned visual and aural event, designed for the purpose of gaining understanding, agreement or action. A survey conducted by Crosling and Ward (2002) identified presentations as one of the most common forms of oral communication expected of business graduates.

For a presentation to reach its objective, three things must happen:

1. the speaker must have a clear aim;
2. the material must be organised in such a way that the aim is supported;
3. and the presentation should be engaging for both speaker and audience.

Similar to written assignments, all oral presentations have the same basic framework i.e. an introduction, a body and a conclusion. In delivery, this translates as:

1. tell the audience what you are going to tell them;
2. tell them;
3. tell them what you have just told them.

## 11.2 Planning and preparation

### 11.2.1 Analysing your audience

Try to empathise with the people in the audience and consider the following:

- What are the needs and expectations of the students?
- What are the needs and expectations of the lecturer?
- What do they know already? (for instance, are you merely repeating what has already been said during lectures?)
- What do they need to know in order to understand your presentation?
- What are their likes/dislikes in presentation style, use of technology, format, if any?

## 11.3 Presentation design

### 11.3.1 Objective

Just as it is important to make explicit the aim of a written assignment, the speaker must define the purpose of his or her presentation clearly and explicitly and then use a suitable communication framework which supports this aim. For example, in some units the aim may be to *persuade* the audience to purchase a product or service. In others, the aim may be to *inform*, i.e. to present the findings of a particular company's marketing strategy or to present a case study analysis and to link this analysis to management theory.

## 11.3.2 Content

An important consideration before preparing the content of a presentation is the time you have to present. For example, group presentations may be 30 minutes' duration, however, each group member might only speak for five or six minutes. In some units there may be a penalty for presentations which go over time, therefore, it is important that the content fits within the time available. It is also important that you rehearse several times before delivering the final presentation. This will check your timing, further familiarise you with the material, and give you greater confidence in your delivery.

In terms of content, the first step is to decide on the ideas which are most suitable for the presentation, bearing in mind the objective of the presentation and your audience analysis. Each idea should be assessed against your objective and the needs of the audience. The material you use to support these ideas can mean the difference between a dull presentation and one which is engaging and vivid. This material can also make the difference between a presentation that lacks logic and clarity and one which is valid and convincing. Typically, the types of content used to explain, illustrate or quantify your ideas and ultimately strengthen the presentation include: examples, evidence from theory, statistics and testimony. It is also very important that having researched a topic you make sure that appropriate citations are given, either orally or on a slide or handout.

## 11.3.3 Structure

Having decided upon the aim and the content, the next step is to structure the presentation. No matter how interesting the material is, the effectiveness will be lost if it is carelessly put together. The structure provides the framework for your presentation and should therefore be simple, clear and logical.

Try to break the topic into its component parts with 3 to 5 main ideas. Any more may lead to information overload and you may lose the interest of the audience. These main themes or ideas should also be developed through supporting materials and evidence. Remember to cite your sources, particularly with regard to direct quotations, statistical data, charts, diagrams and so forth.

There are many ways to structure a presentation and some of the more common types of structures include:

### Informative presentations

**Introduction:**

Attention-getting statement/visual
Agenda

**Body:**
1. Main point
Sub-point
— Supporting material
Sub-point
— Supporting material

2. Main point
Sub-point
— Supporting material
Sub-point
— Supporting material

3. Main point
Sub-point
— Supporting material
Sub-point
— Supporting material

**Conclusion:**
Summary of key arguments
Implications
Creative close

The functions of the introduction are to:

- introduce team members (in a group presentation)
- capture the attention of the audience and draw them into the topic (agenda)
- establish rapport with the audience and motivate them to listen
- segue smoothly into the body of the presentation.

The functions of the body are to:

- provide a logical framework which addresses the aim of the presentation
- break the content into understandable parts (usually no more than five)
- develop these main points through appropriate supporting material.

The functions of the conclusion are to:

- summarise the main points
- examine implications (if any)
- end on a positive and engaging note.

## Persuasive presentations

There are various persuasive formats that students can adopt in order to persuade the audience to alter its thinking, do something (e.g. buy a product or service) or refrain from doing something (e.g. give up smoking).

**Monroe's Motivated Sequence** (Comeaux, 1996) is structured as follows:

**Attention**
Attention-getting statement/visual (stimulating the audience's interest through the use of statistics, rhetorical questions, quotations, humour or anecdote. Whatever the choice, it must be relevant to the topic.)
Introductions (in a group presentation)
Agenda

**Need**
State the problem
Describe and illustrate the need:
— Evidence

**Satisfaction**
State the solution
— Evidence
Demonstrate how it meets need
— Evidence

**Visualisation**
Benefits of solution

**Action**
Call the audience to act

The **AIDA: Attention-Interest-Desire-Action** (Eunson, 2005, p. 418) persuasive structure is as follows:

**Attention**
Attention-getting statement/visual
Introductions (in a group presentation)
Agenda

**Interest**
Create interest in and a desire for the product, service or idea
Characteristics
Evidence

**Desire**
Benefits of the product, service or idea based on the audience's needs and desires

**Action**
Call the audience to act
— Make the response easy (e.g. give web address or toll free phone number)

The keys to a successful persuasive presentation are knowing:

- what exactly you want the audience to do
- the solution you offer solves the problem (Monroe's Motivated Sequence)
- the reasons why the audience should accept the persuasive proposition address the audience's needs and desires
- the reasons why the audience should accept the persuasive proposition are clear
- the reasons why the audience should accept the persuasive proposition are well supported by evidence.

## 11.4 Visual support

By this time, you have the basic framework of your presentation and the ideas you wish to cover. The next step is to consider the visual and verbal support you need to add credibility to the presentation. Visual and verbal support helps the audience to grasp concepts and ideas. It also helps the speaker to clarify and amplify key points.

As well as Powerpoint slide presentations, visual support could include internet downloads, DVD material, demonstration, or it might include role plays, photographs, illustrations, maps, graphs, diagrams, etc. However, it does not need to be very technical to be effective. Try to experiment! If you use a Powerpoint presentation, there are some basic rules. Each slide should:

- be uncluttered and simple
- be attractive and visually appealing
- use large font
- have five words to a line
- have seven lines to a slide
- use animation and sound effects sparingly.

### 11.4.1 Handouts

Handouts are useful as they reinforce the message by representing the main points of the presentation, as well as additional reading in the form of a reference list. Like any form of visual support, they add interest to a presentation.

Handouts should:

- be simple
- relate directly to the objective of the presentation
- have high visual impact
- not distract the audience.

## 11.5 Delivery

Effective presentations are as much to do with **how** you say it as **what** you say.

### 11.5.1 Methods of delivery

It is important to speak extemporaneously (i.e. free flowing or naturally) when delivering a presentation. Extemporaneous speech is the most effective style of delivery since you will be able to maintain eye contact with the audience and behave in an enthusiastic and sincere fashion. It is unnecessary to write a fully prepared script, although some people prefer to do it this way. If you have to, use cue cards to jog the memory. These should only contain key words or phrases.

### 11.5.2 Rehearsal

Never tell yourself that it will be "OK on the day". Try to give yourself adequate time to run through the material a number of times. Your first few practices will help you to add visuals, examples and anecdotes you had not thought about earlier. Later practices will help you to refine the length of sentences and the choice of words and develop appropriate body language. You will also become more comfortable with the visual support.

Always attempt to check the facilities at the site where you will be presenting, allowing sufficient time to re-arrange the room, if necessary, and check the equipment. If time permits, try to have at least one last rehearsal in the venue itself.

### 11.5.3 Nerve control

Everyone suffers from nerves and everyone is frightened of looking foolish. The important point to remember is that you must welcome and harness your anxiety because you need it to be an effective speaker. It energises you. Without it your performance will be dull and lifeless.

You can control your nerves in several ways:

- Through sufficient preparation and planning
- Through practice
- Visualising success
- Positive self-talk

### 11.5.4 Your voice

The main delivery instrument in your presentation is your voice, so it is important that you spend time listening to it and improving it where necessary.

- Speak naturally (be yourself)
- Make sure you can be heard
- Enunciate clearly
- Vary the pitch and pace (sometimes pausing is more powerful than speaking)

## 11.5.5 Non-verbal communication

An audience will interpret your body language. The way you use your body will either reinforce the message, weaken or even contradict it. Be aware of your personal appearance, your posture, facial expressions and gestures.

Audiences are generally impressed with:

- Enthusiasm
- Energy
- Sincerity

You can display these qualities by:

- Standing tall
- Smiling
- Being confident
- Establishing eye contact
- Gesturing appropriately
- Looking as though you are enjoying the experience

Whenever you give a presentation people will want to ask questions, therefore it is prudent to anticipate how you will handle them. It is a good idea to ask that questions be kept until the end of presentation so that they do not disrupt the flow of the presentation. The answers may arise later in the presentation anyway. You should also schedule your questions before your final summation so that you can end on a positive note.

Along with your prepared talk, the questions and answer sessions should also be rehearsed. Ask yourself whether the questions may arise because of lack of clarity, too much information, poor logic or simply because there is no room to include everything!

The main points to remember about question time are:

- Listen carefully – make sure you understand the question
- Rephrase it in your own words
- Answer it concisely
- Where possible refer back to any visuals which may provide the answer
- If a question is long and rambling, highlight only part of it and give a short answer

A few things to avoid:

- Do not be defensive – use open body language and be as pleasant as possible
- Do not lie – if you don't know the answer say so
- Do not enter into an argument with an individual
- Do not rush an answer – pause and think about what you are going to say

## 11.6 Group presentations

Although you will on occasions be asked to present individually, many of the presentation tasks in the faculty are group-based. The basic principles of effective presentation skills with regard to the aim, the structure, visual support and delivery apply. However, attention is focused here on the roles of team members, transitions between individual members' speeches, and the need to provide team members with effective support and constructive feedback.

### 11.6.1 Team balance

It is important to make an assessment of your team's relative strengths and weaknesses with regard to speaking skills. Your stronger speakers should introduce and close the presentation. The speaker who introduces your group should try to capture the attention of the audience, motivate them to listen, establish rapport, preview the main ideas and lead smoothly into the remainder of the presentation. The final speaker needs to be able to capture the essence of the entire presentation. This is achieved by summarising key arguments and ending the presentation with impact. "Thank you" and "Are there any questions?" or "That's it" are not appropriate ways of concluding! Again, the final speaker should provide the audience with a strong summary of 3 to 5 key points, as well as a creative and memorable close (e.g. quotation, demonstration, etc.). Then he or she should pause briefly and allow for applause prior to inviting questions.

### 11.6.2 Transitions

Some of the problems which occur in group presentations do so because group members consider their speeches in isolation. Attention needs to be given to the aim of the presentation and how each member's speech contributes to this purpose. In addition, group members need to "add value" to the work of others in the group. Rather than saying "I'll now pass you on to Michael", it is more effective to summarise your own section, then find words which lend weight to the next speaker's contribution. Something like "I've explored five characteristics of effective groups, and now Michael will take this further by examining the important role of leadership within a group context" is a better way to introduce the next member of your group.

### 11.6.3 Support for the speaker

Support for your group is not only achieved verbally. It is important that your non-verbal communication is also supportive. This means that while a group member is speaking, you should not fiddle with notes, play with pens, or gaze into the distance. Your role is to focus all your attention on what the speaker is saying through your eye contact and the position of your body.

### 11.6.4 Your role as coach

Even if you feel you are a very good presenter, it is vital that you consider the performance of the group as a whole. A general rule of thumb is that eight hours of rehearsal is required for every hour of presentation. It is during these rehearsals that everyone can provide constructive feedback on the group's performance. Areas to be reviewed should include clarity of aim, content, structure, visual support, vocal delivery, non-verbal communication, transitions and timing. It is also a time to lend support, encourage risk-taking and coach those in your group.

## 11.7 Evaluating the presentation

It is always worthwhile spending some time reviewing your presentation and learning how to make improvements for the future. Even when the presentation is successful, a review is still a good idea. Some elements of success are:

- Clear objectives
- The content met the needs of the audience
- The structure of the presentation promoted audience understanding or persuasion
- Use of visual support was appropriate and creative
- Vocal delivery and gestures demonstrated confidence and enthusiasm
- Speaker's attitude toward self and audience promoted success

## 11.8 Why do some presentations go wrong?

As far as presentations are concerned, the most common complaints which cause misunderstanding (and/or boredom) can be summarised as follows:

- Distracting visuals/verbals/vocals
- Failure to speak to time
- Equipment failure
- The material is too technical/pitched too high or too low
- Poor organisation of material
- Inappropriate pace
- Failure to maintain the audience's attention
- Information overload
- Lack of enthusiasm
- Lack of rapport with audience

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# Chapter 12
# Exam strategies

Students often feel stressed when preparing and sitting for exams. However, you can minimise your apprehension if you adopt a systematic, serious and sustained approach towards your exam preparation. This means that your exam preparation should not be limited to a week or so prior to the exam.

It is important to try to adopt a professional approach to your exams rather than responding emotionally. Try to think of exams as tasks that must be done, and prepare for them thoroughly and in an organised way. Furthermore, it is helpful to know that while you may feel nervous about taking exams, this is a normal response. Your task is to prepare well, and to try and put your nervousness aside as you sit for the exams.

On the other hand, if your stress levels are very high and not assisted by the approach we have suggested, university services such as Counselling can help you with stress management. The Learning Skills Unit can also assist you with your time management and study skills, and help you with useful techniques to successfully complete exams.

## 12.1 Preparing for exams

### 12.1.1 Establish the type of exam

You should begin preparing for your exams in the early weeks of the semester. A useful start is to get copies of past exams for your units, and to look at these in relation to the unit objectives and assignment task requirements. Past exams can be found at http://exams.lib.monash.edu.au/

The type of exam questions, the unit objectives and the assessment requirements will give you some indication of how to go about studying the unit to best prepare for the exam.

- For instance, if the exam is composed of multiple choice questions where there are only slight differences between the possible answers, you will know that you need to understand your unit material in detail.
- In short answer questions that require succinct and focused responses in exams, you need to know the information thoroughly and be able to express that knowledge efficiently.
- In a unit such as accounting, if there are problem questions that ask you to analyse a situation and apply accounting principles, as well as complete computational processes, you need to develop a mental flexibility with the study material so that you can apply it to differing situations. A good way to achieve flexibility is to practise a range of questions.
- If there are longer essay type questions in a subject such as Management, you need to be very familiar with your unit material, as well as being able to apply ideas from across topics in your response to the question.

### 12.1.2 Develop a broad understanding of the unit's objectives

Approach your exam preparation with an aim to *understand* your unit, rather than simply trying to rote learn the material in the course. If you form an overall understanding of the objectives of your unit, this will provide you with a broad framework that you can place topics and details. This means that it is more likely that you will understand the topics and details, and how they relate to each other. You will then be able to study with meaning and understanding, rather than relying on rote learning. If you understand your unit and its topics and ideas in an integrated way, it is also more likely that you will enjoy studying the unit, and therefore perform well in it.

One way to form an overview of a unit is to read the Unit Objectives, usually listed in the Unit Outline. You can then draw a diagram that represents the objectives, and place the different topics in the course under the larger categories in the diagram. This approach will position you well to be able to apply information to an exam task from more than one topic, as is often required in essay questions for a unit such as Management.

### 12.1.3 Develop summaries of topics

Early in the semester you should develop the practice of making summaries of the topics on a weekly basis. This will mean that you understand your material from week to week, making exam review a less onerous task.

Even if you write topic summaries from early in the semester, you need to review your unit and topics for the exam. You should try to summarise the topics, bringing together information from your lectures, text book, tutorials, and other readings. In summarising, you select the main points and sub points. Under these, you select and include key information (words and phrases).

By selecting the key ideas and information from the less important, and expressing them succinctly, you will deepen your understanding of the concepts and ideas for your units. This is because the process of discriminating important information from less important information, and your ability to summarise effectively, requires you to understand the material.

### 12.1.4 Review unit material and topics

Review the unit and topics several times from your summaries, only going back to the lecture notes or text if there is something about which you are unsure.

To develop flexibility with the information, think of questions that may be asked and form responses to these.

### 12.1.5 Practise past exam questions

During the latter part of the semester, you should select past exam questions that relate to topics that you have already studied. Plan and write responses for these. It is a good idea to do this in study groups, so that you can compare and contrast your understandings and responses with classmates, learning from each other. If suitable, you can consult your tutor during their consultation times to get further feedback.

### 12.1.6 Multiple choice questions

To prepare for multiple choice questions you need to be very familiar with the content of your units in a detailed fashion. Often, the differences between correct and incorrect choices are subtle and require close and careful understanding.

It is also important to clearly understand the question. You need to analyse, or "pull apart" the questions carefully, especially if English is not your first language.

Study the analysis of the multiple choice questions for a first year accounting and finance exam below:

Exchanges which take place between the *business and outside parties* and *affect the financial position of the business* are called:

(a) bills of exchange

(b) monetary measure

(c) financial transactions

(d) balance day adjustments

In the example above note that the main topic is "Exchanges". The question asks the name of the exchanges that are:

a) between business and outside parties;

AND THAT

b) affect the business' financial position.

According to SAC4, which of the following is NOT a necessary characteristic of liabilities:

(a) future sacrifice of economic benefits

(b) present obligation to make that sacrifice

(c) obligation is to another party

(d) obligation arose out of a past transaction

(e) none of the above

Note the word NOT in the above question.

In comparing the profit and inventory (asset) figures resulting from the use of the perpetual inventory method (incorporating a stocktake) and the periodic inventory method, which of the following is correct?

(a) perpetual always shows higher inventory (asset) and higher profits

(b) periodic always shows higher inventory (asset) and higher profits

(c) the two methods show different inventory (asset) and profit figures but it is not possible to predict which will be higher

(d) periodic and perpetual will result in the same inventory (asset) and profit figures

## 12.1.7 Short answer and essay questions

When preparing for short answer and essay exam questions, practise analysing questions so that you can focus your answer on what you've been asked. Short answer and essay questions require you to apply and interpret the material you have studied.

While some short answer questions may ask you to recall, or retell, information, most will expect you to be able to interpret and analyse information. Essay questions require you to apply, interpret and analyse, and may require information in your answer from several of a unit's topics.

Study the short answer question and analysis from a Management exam below:

***List*** the five stages of group development. ***What*** is involved in each stage?

This question requires you to do two things:

1. **"List"** – You must define/explain the five stages of group development.
2. **"What is involved…"** – You must explain how the stages achieve the objectives, how they relate to each other, and so on.

A suitable plan for this question is as follows:

- Explain to your examiner the details of each stage, one at a time.
- Explain how they work. As such, you can consider aspects such as the effects, advantages and disadvantages of certain elements of the stages. You can also explain how the stages relate to each other in group development.
- Provide examples for stages, if possible.
- Link groups and the stages to other topics, such as leaders and conflict.

### 12.1.7.1 Typical essay question

Study a typical question for a Management unit and our analysis.

Describe the *sources of stress* in organisations. Discuss the *strategies management can use to reduce employee stress* at the workplace, as well as *what individuals can do to reduce their own stress*.

This question is asking:

- What causes stress in organisations?
- What can management do to decrease employee stress? What are the advantages and disadvantages of these strategies?
- What can individuals do to reduce stress? What are the advantages and disadvantages of these strategies?

### 12.1.8 Calculation questions

It is important that you are able to recognise when particular processes are required, and that you can apply them correctly. The best way to do this is to make sure you understand the processes, and their advantages and disadvantages for particular purposes. You then need to practise these in a range of situations.

## 12.2 Operating in the exam

Make sure you get to the exam in plenty of time. This may mean finding out the location a day or so before the exam, and planning how to get there so that you are not rushed.

If you feel nervous, try to settle yourself. Take a few deep breaths and then get on with the task of completing the exam.

Students often say that they feel quite inadequate when they first read the exam paper – do not be discouraged if you experience this. Students also say that as they re-read and think about the paper, they realise that they know more than they first thought.

### 12.2.1 Reading and noting time

Make sure that you read the instructions carefully and thoroughly so that you understand which and how many questions you need to answer. There is no point in doing more questions than required. Furthermore, you are throwing marks away if you do not attempt the required number of questions, or if you do too many!

- Read all questions carefully. If you have a choice, select the questions you will do.
- Order these. Do the questions you feel most confident and comfortable about first. This will boost your confidence for questions about which you are less sure.
- Develop and write down a time line for these questions, allocating the amount of time commensurate with the number of marks. For example, if an exam of 3 hours is worth 70 marks, this means you should allocate about 2.5 minutes per mark. If a question is worth 8 marks, the time you should spend on the question should be about 20 minutes.
- If you have time, mentally plan answers for one or two written response questions, or select answers to some multiple choice questions.

### 12.2.2 Completing the exam

- Try to stick to your allocated time. If you do not, you may find that there is not enough time for a question that is worth a large number of marks. In this way, you are "throwing marks away".
- If you have not completed a question but have run out of your allocated time, briefly list the points you still need to make, and move on to the next question. You can come back to this question if you have time towards the end of the exam. If you do not have time, you have listed your points, and you may at least get some marks for these.
- When you have completed the required questions, go back and complete answers for which you ran out of time earlier. Re-read your responses, and make minor adjustments if required. It is not wise to radically change responses at this point in the exam.

### 12.2.3 Answering multiple choice questions

- Do the questions that you are most confident with first. Then you can go back and do those that are less clear to you.
- Analyse the question as we have explained above, so that you are clear on the directions and precisely what is being asked. Select the answer that you think is the most correct. If the answer to the question appears ambiguous, and you are unsure of which response is correct, go back to the question and check again exactly the conditions the question presents and what the question is asking you to identify.
- If you still do not know what is correct and if marks are not lost for incorrect answers, make an educated guess, and select what you think is *most correct*.

### 12.2.4 Completing written response questions

- Take a few minutes to plan you answers in dot points before you begin writing. Make sure that you have analysed the question in the way we have explained above. Respond to what you are being asked, not what you would like the question to be.
- Focus your answer on the question.

## 12.3 Checklist for exams

- Prepare a plan for exam preparation, even beginning early in the semester, and try to stick to it.
- Work systematically and thoroughly throughout the semester. This will take some of the pressure off you as you face the exam period.
- Make summaries of your lectures weekly. This process will help you to understand your topics and unit from week to week, and be useful as you review for the exam later in the semester.
- Get past exam papers for your units and study the type of questions asked.
- Towards the end of the semester form study groups with your class mates where you can express and check understandings and learn from each other.
- Practise past exam questions under exam conditions before the exam, especially essay type questions.
- Work in a controlled and systematic way in the exam. Try to control your nerves and just do the best you can.
- After the exam, try to put your responses out of your mind. There is nothing more that you can do at this stage to influence the results.
- If you have not been successful in an exam, try to understand how you could have improved your performance. This may mean speaking to your lecturer or tutor, or working with Learning Support staff earlier in a unit, to make sure that you are approaching the unit in the appropriate manner.